三国志 44

蜀呉の死闘

横山光輝

希望コミックス

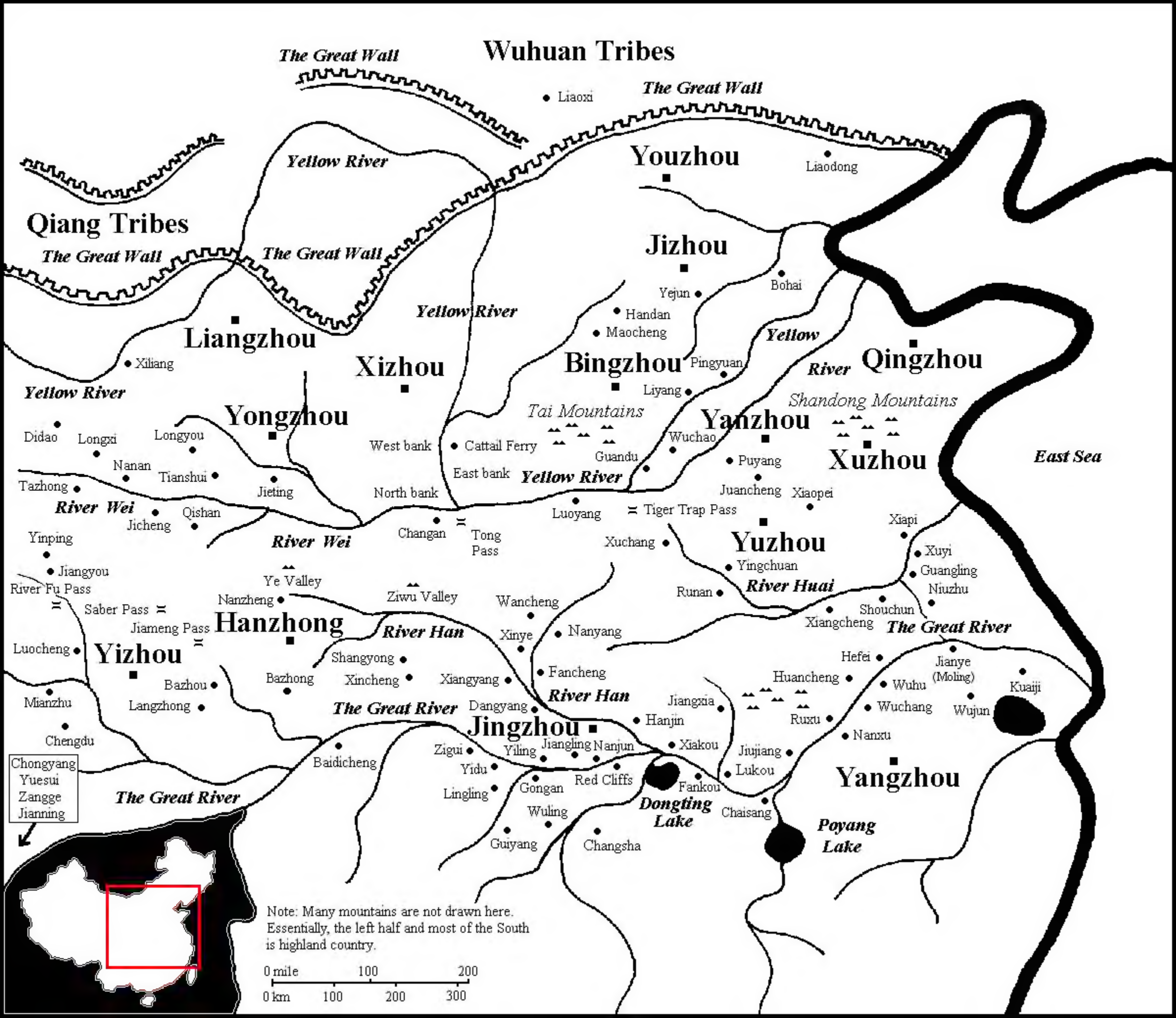
SANGOKUSHI

44

MORTAL STRUGGLE OF SHU AND WU

LIU BEI XUANDE

YOKOYAMA MITSUTERU


Wuhuan Tribes
The Great Wall
The Great Wall
Liaoxi
Youzhou
Liaodong
Yellow River
Qiang Tribes
The Great Wall
The Great Wall
Jizhou
Bohai
Yejun
Handan
Maocheng
Yellow River
Liangzhou
Xizhou
Bingzhou
Pingyuan
Yellow River
Qingzhou
Xiliang
Yellow River
Liyang
Shandong Mountains
Tai Mountains
Yongzhou
Yanzhou
Didao
Longxi
Longyou
West bank
Cattail Ferry
Wuchao
Guandu
Xuzhou
East Sea
Nanan
East bank
Yellow River
Puyang
Tianshui
Tazhong
Jieting
North bank
Juancheng
Xiaopei
River Wei
Qishan
Luoyang
Tiger Trap Pass
Jicheng
Changan
Tong Pass
Xiapi
Yuzhou
Yinping
River Wei
Xuchang
Xuyi
Jiangyou
Ye Valley
Yingchuan
Guangling
River Fu Pass
Ziwu Valley
Runan
River Huai
Niuzhu
Saber Pass
Nanzheng
Wancheng
Shouchun
Jiameng Pass
Hanzhong
River Han
Xinye
Nanyang
Xiangcheng
The Great River
Luocheng
Yizhou
Shangyong
Hefei
Jianye (Moling)
Fancheng
Huancheng
Bazhou
Bazhong
Xincheng
Xiangyang
Wuhu
Kuaiji
River Han
Jiangxia
Mianzhu
Langzhong
The Great River
Dangyang
Wuchang
Wujun
Ruxu
Hanjin
Jingzhou
Chengdu
Nanxu
Zigui
Yiling
Jiangling
Nanjun
Xiakou
Jiujiang
Baidicheng
Yidu
Lukou
Yangzhou
Chongyang
Yuesui
Zangge
Jianning
Red Cliffs
Fankou
Gongan
Lingling
Dongting Lake
Chaisang
Wuling
Poyang Lake
Guiyang
Changsha
The Great River
Note: Many mountains are not drawn here.
Essentially, the left half and most of the South
is highland country.
0 mile 100 200
0 km 100 200 300

MAJOR CHARACTERS OF SANGOKUSHI

CAI MAO:
FORMER GENERAL OF LIU BIAO, WHO BECAME THE SUPREME ADMIRAL OF WEI'S NAVY WHEN JINGZHOU SURRENDERED TO CAO CAO. IN VOLUME 25, HE IS FRAMED BY ZHOU YU'S PLOT AND THUS EXECUTED BY CAO CAO.

CAO CAO MENGDE:
THE AMBITIOUS AND MACHIAVELLIAN HERO OF SANGOKUSHI. RISES TO BECOME KING OF WEI BUT DECLINES TO BECOME EMPEROR HIMSELF. PASSES AWAY FROM ILLNESS IN VOLUME 42.

CAO HONG:
YOUNGER COUSIN OF CAO CAO AND NOW HIS LOYAL GENERAL.

CAO PI:
ELDEST SON OF CAO CAO. SUCCEEDS TO KING OF WEI AFTER HIS FATHER'S DEATH AND SOON DETHRONES THE LAST HAN EMPEROR TO BECOME AN EMPEROR OF A NEW DYNASTY.

CAO REN:
COUSIN OF CAO CAO AND NOW HIS LOYAL GENERAL. PORTRAYED AS BRAVE BUT HOT-TEMPERED IN THE STORY.

CHENG GONG:
A CITY GUARD CAPTAIN WHO ARRESTED CAO CAO, ONLY TO FREE AND ESCAPE WITH HIM AFTER SYMPATHIZING WITH HIS STORY. HOWEVER, HE LATER DEFECTS TO LU BU AND SERVES AS HIS ADVISOR. IN VOLUME 14, HE IS EXECUTED ALONG WITH LU BU.

CHENG YU:
IMPORTANT AND LOYAL STRATEGIST SERVING CAO CAO.

CHEN DENG:
THE SON OF CHEN GUI AND FORMERLY TAO QIAN OF XUZHOU'S SUBORDINATE. HE AND HIS FATHER SUCCESSFULLY PLOTTED LU BU'S DOWNFALL.

CHEN GUI:
FATHER OF CHEN DENG WHO SUCCESSFULLY PLOTTED LU BU'S DOWNFALL. DESPITE SECRETLY WORKING TOGETHER WITH LIU BEI AGAINST CAO CAO, CAO CAO SPARES HIS LIFE AND ALLOWS HIM TO CONTINUE LIVING IN XUZHOU.

DIAN WEI:
CAO CAO'S PERSONAL BODYGUARD, RENOWNED FOR HIS STRENGTH. HE IS ALSO KNOWN BY THE NICKNAME, "E LAI," IN REFERENCE TO THE GENERAL OF THE SAME NAME WHO SERVED UNDER KING ZHOU OF SHANG. IN VOLUME 12, HE WAS KILLED DURING ZHANG XIU'S PLOT TO KILL CAO CAO.

DIAO CHAN:
A MAID TO WANG YUN, WHO RAISED HER AS HIS OWN DAUGHTER. SHE AND WANG YUN PLOTTED TO DISTANCE LU BU FROM DONG ZHUO BY HAVING HER SEDUCE BOTH MEN. IN VOLUME 8, SHE COMMITTED SUICIDE AFTER ACCOMPLISHING HER GOAL.

DONG CHENG:
ELDER STATESMAN OF HAN WHO IS EMPEROR XIAN'S CONFIDANT. EMPEROR XIAN SECRETELY ASKS HIM TO ELIMINATE CAO CAO, WHO NOW RULES THE IMPERIAL COURT AS CHANCELLOR. IN VOLUME 17, HE IS EXECUTED AFTER HIS ASSASSINATION PLOT IS FOUND OUT BY CAO CAO.

DONG ZHUO:
GOVERNOR OF LIANGZHOU WHO LATER SEIZED CONTROL OF LUOYANG AND SEATED HIMSELF AS THE CHANCELLOR OF HAN, BECOMING AN INFAMOUS TYRANT. IN VOLUME 8, HE IS BETRAYED AND KILLED BY HIS RIGHT-HAND MAN, LU BU.

EMPRESS HE:
ORIGINALY A PEASANT, HER BEAUTY WAS NOTICED BY THE TEN ATTENDANTS AND SHE ROSE TO BECOME THE EMPRESS, UTILIZING RUTHLESS MEANS. HOWEVER, SHE AND HER SON WERE REMOVED FROM POWER AND KILLED BY DONG ZHUO WHEN HE CAME TO POWER.

FA ZHENG:
FORMER SUBJECT OF LIU ZHANG, BUT DEFECTED TO LIU BEI DURING HIS CONQUEST OF SHU. HE IS ONE OF LIU BEI'S KEY STRATEGISTS.

GAN NING:
FORMER-PIRATE WHO IS NOW A FIRECE GENERAL OF WU.

GONGSUN ZAN:
GOVERNOR OF BEIPING, WHO WAGES WAR AGAINST YUAN SHAO FOR KILLING HIS YOUNG BROTHER. IN VOLUME 15, YUAN SHAO'S ARMY CONQUERS BEIPING, CAUSING GONGSUN ZAN TO COMMIT SUICIDE.

GUAN PING:
GUAN YU'S ADOPTED SON AS OF VOLUME 19. SERVES ALONGSIDE HIS FATHER UNTIL THEIR DEATH IN VOLUME 42.

GUAN XING:
GUAN YU'S SECOND SON, WHO BECOMES A PROMINENT SHU OFFICER AFTER HIS FATHER'S DEATH.

GUAN YU YUNCHANG:
SWORN YOUNGER BROTHER TO LIU BEI AND SWORN OLDER BROTHER TO ZHANG FEI. AFTER THE FAILED SIEGE ON FANCHENG, HE IS EVENTUALLY CAUGHT BY WU FORCES AND PROMPTLY EXECUTED IN VOLUME 42.

GUO JIA:
THE TALENTED STRATEGIST AND ADVISOR TO CAO CAO. HE DIES FROM ILLNESS DURING CAO CAO'S CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE YUAN FAMILY (UNSHOWN IN MANGA).

HE JIN:
ORIGINALLY A SIMPLE BUTCHER, HE BECAME A GENERAL WHEN HIS YOUNGER SISTER ROSE TO BECOME EMPRESS HE. HE IS KILLED BY THE TEN ATTENDANTS DURING THEIR POWER STRUGGLE IN VOLUME 3.

HUANG GAI:
LOYAL GENERAL OF WU, WHOSE FAMILY HAS SERVED THE SUN FAMILY FOR THREE GENERATIONS.

HUANG ZHONG:
AN ELDERLY WARRIOR GENERAL RENOWNED ESPECIALLY FOR HIS SKILL WITH THE BOW. FORMERLY SERVED LIU BIAO AND HAN XUAN BUT DEFECTS TO LIU BEI IN VOLUME 28. FALLS IN BATTLE AGAINST WU FORCES IN VOLUME 43.

HUA XIN:
WEI MINISTER WHO RISES TO BECOME CHANCELLOR OF WEI UNDER CAO PI'S REIGN.

JIANG QIN:
GENERAL OF WU. FORMERLY A BANDIT ALONG WITH ZHOU TAI, BUT BECAME SUN CE'S SUBORDINATE OUT OF ADMIRATION FOR SUN CE'S FATHER, SUN JIAN.

JIA XU:
FORMER STRATEGIST OF ZHANG XIU, WHO PLOTTED A FAILED ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT ON CAO CAO, WHICH LEFT DIAN WEI DEAD. AS OF VOLUME 16, HE HAS DEFECTED TO CAO CAO AND SERVES AS HIS ADVISOR.

LI DIAN:
SCHOLARLY GENERAL UNDER THE SERVICE OF CAO CAO.

LI RU:
CUNNING ADVISOR TO DONG ZHUO. WITH HIS ADVICE, DONG ZHUO FIRMLY SECURES HIS SEAT AS THE CHANCELLOR OF HAN. IN VOLUME 8, HE IS KILLED ALONG WITH DONG ZHUO WHEN LU BU BETRAYS THEM.

LIU BIAO:
THE GOVERNOR OF JINGZHOU. HE PASSES AWAY DUE TO SICKNESS IN VOLUME 22 AND THE CONSEQUENT SUCCESSION CRISIS ALLOWS CAO CAO TO TAKE OVER JINGZHOU.

LIU BEI XUANDE:
THE CENTRAL CHARACTER OF SANGOKUSHI. A VIRTUOUS MAN, WHO CLAIMS DESCENT FROM EMPEROR JING OF HAN. HE HAS SWORN AN OATH OF BROTHERHOOD WITH GUAN YU AND ZHANG FEI. HE BECOMES AN EMPEROR AND ESTABLISHES A SUCCESOR-DYNASTY TO HAN IN VOLUME 43.

LIU FENG:
LIU BEI'S ADOPTED SON. ORIGINALLY THE NEPHEW OF LIU MI, HE WAS ADOPTED UPON FIRST SIGHT BY LIU BEI WHO TOOK A LIKING TO HIM IN VOLUME 21. HE IS UNFORTUNATELY EXECUTED BY LIU BEI IN VOLUME 43 AFTER DENYING AID TO GUAN YU.

LIU QI:
ELDEST SON OF LIU BIAO WHO TEMPORARILY LOSES HIS INHERITANCE OF JINGZHOU DUE TO CAI MAO'S PLOT. IN VOLUME 29, HE PASSES AWAY FROM ILLNESS AND THE RIGHTFUL OWNERSHIP OF JINGZHOU CONTINUES TO BE DEBATED BETWEEN SUN QUAN AND LIU BEI.

LIU ZHANG:
INCOMPETENT RULER OF SHU (ALTERNATIVE NAME FOR YIZHOU). HE SEEKS LIU BEI'S HELP TO FEND OFF ZHANG LU, BUT RELATIONS SOON SOUR AND LIU BEI USURPS HIS RULE OVER SHU. AS OF VOLUME 35, HE IS EXILED TO JINGZHOU.

LU BU:
ALTHOUGH REPUTED TO BE THE STRONGEST WARRIOR, HE IS HOT-HEADED AND RARELY HEEDS WISE ADVICE. IN VOLUME 14, HE WAS BETRAYED BY HIS SUBORDINATES, AND EXECUTED BY CAO CAO.

LU MENG:
FIRECE WU GENERAL, WHO AT LAST CONQUERS JINGZHOU FOR SUN QUAN, CAPTURING GUAN YU IN DOING SO. UNFORTUNATELY DIES TO A SUDDEN ILLNESS AFTER GUAN YU'S EXECUTION IN VOLUME 42, CAUSING SOME TO THINK HE WAS CURSED.

LU SU:
IMPORTANT MILITARY GENERAL AND ADVISOR OF WU.

LU XUN:
TALENTED WU OFFICIAL WHO QUICKLY RISES TO FAVOUR AFTER SUCCESSFULLY PLANNING THE CONQUEST OF JINGZHOU.

MA CHAO:
A FIERCE WARRIOR WHO SEEKS TO AVENGE HIS FATHER MA TENG'S DEATH AT CAO CAO'S HANDS. IN VOLUME 35, HE ENTERS LIU BEI'S SERVICE AND BECOMES ONE OF HIS MOST VALUABLE GENERALS.

MA DAI:
A NEPHEW OF MA CHAO WHO ENTERS LIU BEI'S SERVICE ALONGSIDE HIS UNCLE.

MA LIANG:
ONE OF LIU BEI'S ADVISORS. HE IS THE FOURTH YOUNGEST OF THE FIVE MA BROTHERS, AND IS NOTED FOR HIS INTELLECT AND WHITE EYEBROWS.

MA TENG:
GOVERNOR OF XILIANG AND FATHER OF MA CHAO, WHO SIGNED THE BLOOD-PLEDGE TO ELIMINATE CAO CAO. IN VOLUME 30, HE IS EXECUTED FOR A FAILED ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT OF CAO CAO.

MENG DA:
FORMER SUBJECT OF LIU ZHANG WHO DEFECTS TO LIU BEI, ALONG WITH HIS GOOD FRIENDS ZHANG SONG AND FA ZHENG. HE LATER DEFECTS TO WEI IN VOLUME 43, AFTER REALIZING HE WOULD BE KILLED IN SHU TO BEAR RESPONSIBILITY FOR GUAN YU'S DEATH.

MI ZHU:
ONE OF LIU BEI'S ADVISORS.

PANG DE:
FIERCE GENERAL WHO FORMERLY SERVED MA TENG AND THEN MA CHAO. IN VOLUME 36, HE DEFECTS TO CAO CAO'S SERVICE DUE TO A TROUBLED RELATIONSHIP WITH ZHANG LU, THE LORD OF HANZHONG. PERISHES IN THE BATTLE OF FANCHENG AGAINST GUAN YU IN VOLUME 41.

PANG TONG SHIYUAN:
NICKNAMED THE YOUNG PHOENIX (FENGCHU), HE IS A MASTERFUL STRATEGIST SAID TO BE ZHUGE LIANG'S EQUAL. AFTER ENTERING LIU BEI'S SERVICE, HE TRAGICALLY MET AN EARLY DEATH IN SHU WHEN AMBUSHED BY ZHANG REN IN VOLUME 34.

SHUI JING:
HIS REAL NAME IS SIMA HUI BUT HE IS MORE COMMONLY KNOWN BY HIS TAOIST NAME, SHUI JING (MEANING WATER MIRROR). HE IS THE TEACHER OF ZHUGE LIANG, PANG TONG, AND XU SHU.

SUN CE:
ELDEST SON OF SUN JIAN, WHO TURNS THE SUN FAMILY'S FORTUNE AROUND WITH HIS CONQUEST OF THE SOUTH-LANDS. IN VOLUME 19, A FAILED ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT AND CONFLICT WITH YU JI CAUSES HIS BODY AND MENTAL HEALTH TO WEAKEN. HE SUCCUMBS TO DEATH SHORTLY AFTER.

SUN JIAN:
THE GOVERNOR OF CHANGSHA WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE ALLIANCE TO BRING DOWN DONG ZHUO. HOWEVER, HIS ALLIES LIU BIAO AND YUAN SHAO TO TURN ON HIM WHEN HE TRIES TO KEEP THE IMPERIAL SEAL FOR HIMSELF. IN VOLUME 7, HE IS KILLED IN BATTLE AGAINST YUAN SHAO.

SUN QIAN:
TRUSTED ADVISOR TO LIU BEI. (HIS ROLE IS MUCH SMALLER IN SANGOKUSHI COMPARED TO THE ORIGINAL NOVEL.)

SUN QUAN:
YOUNGER BROTHER OF SUN CE AND THE CURRENT RULER OF WU, THE SOUTHLANDS OF CHINA.

TAISHI CI:
GENERAL WHO FORMERLY SERVED LIU YAO BUT DEFECTED TO SUN CE IN VOLUME 11. DURING THE BATTLE OF HEFEI (VOL. 29), HE FALLS PREY TO ZHANG LIAO'S PLAN AND IS KILLED IN BATTLE.

TAO QIAN:
THE KIND GOVERNOR OF XUZHOU WHO ACCIDENTALLY INVOKES CAO CAO'S WRATH WHEN HIS DISLOYAL SUBORDINATE ZHANG KAI KILLS CAO CAO'S FATHER, CAO SONG. UPON HIS DEATH, HE BEQUEATHS XUZHOU TO LIU BEI.

THE TEN ATTENDANTS:
A CORRUPT GROUP OF 10 EUNUCHS WHO WERE THE HIGHEST RANKING MINISTERS OF THE IMPERIAL COURT. THEY WERE KILLED DURING THE POWER STRUGGLE WITH HE JIN IN VOLUME 4.

WANG YUN:
THE MINISTER OF THE MASSES, ONE OF THE 3 HIGHEST RANKING POSTS IN THE IMPERIAL COURT. HE SUCCESSFULLY PLOTS DONG ZHUO'S DOWNFALL USING DIAO CHAN IN VOLUME 8. HOWEVER, HE IS LATER KILLED BY REMNANTS OF DONG ZHUO'S ARMY (UNSHOWN IN MANGA).

WEI YAN:
GENERAL WHO FORMERLY SERVED LIU BIAO AND HAN XUAN BUT HAS DEFECTED TO LIU BEI ALONG WITH HUANG ZHONG IN VOLUME 28.

WEN CHOU:
HE AND YANG LIANG ARE YUAN SHAO'S TWO STRONGEST GENERALS. IN VOLUME 18, HE IS AMBUSHED BY CAO CAO'S ARMY AND KILLED BY GUAN YU.

XIAHOU DUN:
TRUSTED GENERAL OF CAO CAO. HE LOST HIS LEFT EYE DURING A BATTLE AGAINST LU BU'S ARMY IN VOLUME 13.

XU CHU:
TRUSTED BODYGUARD OF CAO CAO. ORIGINALY A PEASANT, HE WAS RECRUITED BY CAO CAO WHO WAS IMPRESSED AFTER SEEING XU CHU'S DUEL WITH DIAN WEI.

XU SHU (SHAN FU):
THE TALENTED STRATEGIST WHO STUDIED UNDER SHUI JING. AFTER A BRIEF STINT OF SERVICE TO LIU BEI, HE IS TRICKED INTO COMING TO XUCHANG AND SERVING CAO CAO (VOLUME 21).

XUN YU:
TALENTED ADVISOR TO CA CAO.

XU HUANG:
CALM AND COLLECTED GENERAL UNDER SERVICE TO CAO CAO. CONSIDERED TO BE ONE OF THE FIVE TOP GENERALS OF WEI BY CHEN SHOU, AUTHOR OF RECORDS OF THE THREE KINGDOMS.

YAN LIANG:
HE AND WEN CHOU ARE YUAN SHAO'S TWO STRONGEST GENERALS. IN VOLUME 17, HE WAS KILLED BY GUAN YU WHILE FIGHTING CAO CAO'S ARMY AT BAIMA.

YAN YAN:
FORMER GENERAL OF LIU ZHANG BUT DEFECTED TO LIU BEI AFTER HIS CAPTURE AT ZHANG FEI'S HANDS IN VOLUME 34. HE IS NOTED FOR HIS ENERGY DESPITE HIS OLD AGE.

YU JIN:
GENERAL SERVING CAO CAO. CONSIDERED TO BE ONE OF THE FIVE TOP GENERALS OF WEI BY CHEN SHOU, AUTHOR OF RECORDS OF THE THREE KINGDOMS.

YUAN SHAO:
OLDER BROTHER OF YUAN SHU AND THE GOVERNOR OF JIZHOU. AFTER MANY YEARS OF WARRING AGAINST CAO CAO FOR CONTROL OF NORTHERN CHINA, HE AND HIS FAMILY ARE DEFEATED.

YUAN SHU:
YOUNGER BROTHER OF YUAN SHAO AND THE GOVERNOR OF NANYANG. AFTER RECEIVING THE IMPERIAL SEAL FROM SUN CE, HE DECLARES HIMSELF AS THE EMPEROR OF ZHONG DYNASTY. IN VOLUME 15, HE DIES OF THIRST AFTER BEING ON THE RUN FROM LIU BEI AND CAO CAO'S ARMIES.

ZHANG BAO:
ELDEST SON OF ZHANG FEI, WHO RISES TO PROMINENCE AFTER THE DEATH OF HIS FATHER.

ZHANG FEI YIDE:
A FIRECE, SHORT-TEMPERED WARRIOR WHO IS THE SWORN YOUNGER BROTHER OF LIU BEI AND GUAN YU. HIS TEMPER EVENTUALLY GETS THE BETTER OF HIM, WHEN HE IS BETRAYED AND KILLED BY HIS SUBORDINATES IN VOLUME 43.

ZHANG LIAO:
ONE OF CAO CAO'S TOP GENERALS. HE WAS FORMERLY LU BU'S SUBORDINATE BUT DEFECTED TO CAO CAO AFTER THE FORMER'S EXECUTION.

ZHANG LU:
THE LEADER OF THE CELESTIAL MASTERS TAOIST MOVEMENT, AND THE RULER OF HANZHONG. IN VOLUME 36, CAO CAO CONQUERS HANZHONG BUT SPARES ZHANG LU.

ZHANG REN:
ONE OF SHU'S MOST CAPABLE GENERALS WHO PLANNED THE AMBUSH THAT KILLED PANG TONG. HE REFUSED TO SERVE LIU BEI UNLIKE MANY OF HIS COMRADES AND WAS THUS EXECUTED WHEN FINALLY CAPTURED AT THE HANDS OF ZHUGE LIANG (VOLUME 35).

ZHANG SONG:
AN ADVISOR TO LIU ZHANG WHO, UPON FAILING TO MAKE AN ALLIANCE BETWEEN CAO CAO AND LIU ZHANG, SOUGHT LIU BEI'S SUPPORT AND SWITCHED HIS ALLEGIANCE. IN VOLUME 34, HE IS EXECUTED WHEN HIS BROTHER REPORTS HIS BETRAYAL TO LIU ZHANG.

ZHANG XIU:
LORD OF WANCHENG WHO ATTEMPTED TO KILL CAO CAO DURING THE BATTLE OF WANCHENG IN VOLUME 12. AFTER YEARS OF CONFLICT AGAINST CAO CAO, HE FINALLY DECIDES TO DEFECT TO CAO CAO IN VOLUME 16.

ZHAO YUN ZILONG:
A FORMER SUBJECT OF YUAN SHAO BUT LATER DEFECTED TO SERVE GONGSUN ZAN. AFTER GONGSUN ZAN'S DEATH, HE BECOMES ONE OF LIU BEI'S MOST TRUSTED GENERALS.

ZHOU TAI:
GENERAL OF WU. FORMERLY A BANDIT ALONG WITH JIANG QIN BUT BECAME SUN CE'S SUBORDINATE OUT OF ADMIRATION FOR HIS FATHER, SUN JIAN.

ZHANG ZHAO:
ELDER STATESMAN AND SUN QUAN'S TRUSTED ADVISOR. HE ORIGINALLY ENTERED SUN CE'S SERVICE ALONG WITH ZHANG HONG, WITH WHOM HE WAS REFERRED TO AS THE "TWO ZHANGS."

ZHOU CANG:
FORMERLY A YELLOW TURBAN, HE MEETS GUAN YU IN VOLUME 18 AND BECOMES HIS SUBORDINATE. COMMITS SUICIDE AFTER LEARNING GUAN YU WAS EXECUTED IN VOLUME 42.

ZHOU YU GONGJIN:
SWORN BROTHER OF SUN CE, AND ONE OF WU'S TOP MINDS, SERVING AS THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF DURING THE BATTLE OF THE RED CLIFFS. HE RECEIVES A CRITICAL ARROW-WOUND DURING HIS NANJUN CAMPAIGN (VOL. 27) WHICH HE NEVER FULLY RECOVERS FROM, LEADING TO HIS TRAGIC EARLY DEATH IN VOLUME 30.

ZHUGE LIANG KONGMING:
MASTERFUL STRATEGIST AND FORMER STUDENT OF SHUI JING. IN VOLUME 21, HE YIELDS TO LIU BEI'S PERSISTENCE AND DECIDES TO BECOME HIS SUBJECT.

SANGOKUSHI (ROMANCE OF THE THREE KINGDOMS)

三国志

VOLUME 44
MORTAL STRUGGLE OF SHU AND WU

MAZE OF STONE SENTINELS IN 8 ARRAYS 170
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（月刊『コミックトム』掲載）

RAPID ADVANCE

I'VE BEEN PONDERING ABOUT LIFE AND DEATH OFTEN THESE DAYS.

INDEED.

IF I MAY SAY SO, YOUR MAJESTY SEEMS RATHER GLUM AS OF LATE...

SUCH EVENTS MAKE IT CLEAR THAT DEATH COMES TO ALL, WHETHER EXPECTED OR NOT, DESIRED OR NOT.

ZHANG FEI'S UNEXPECTED END AND HUANG ZHONG'S SUICIDAL ATTACK ON THE ENEMY CAMPS...

THUS, I ANXIOUSLY WONDER WHETHER I CAN AVENGE MY BROTHERS BEFORE I TOO AM VISITED BY DEATH.

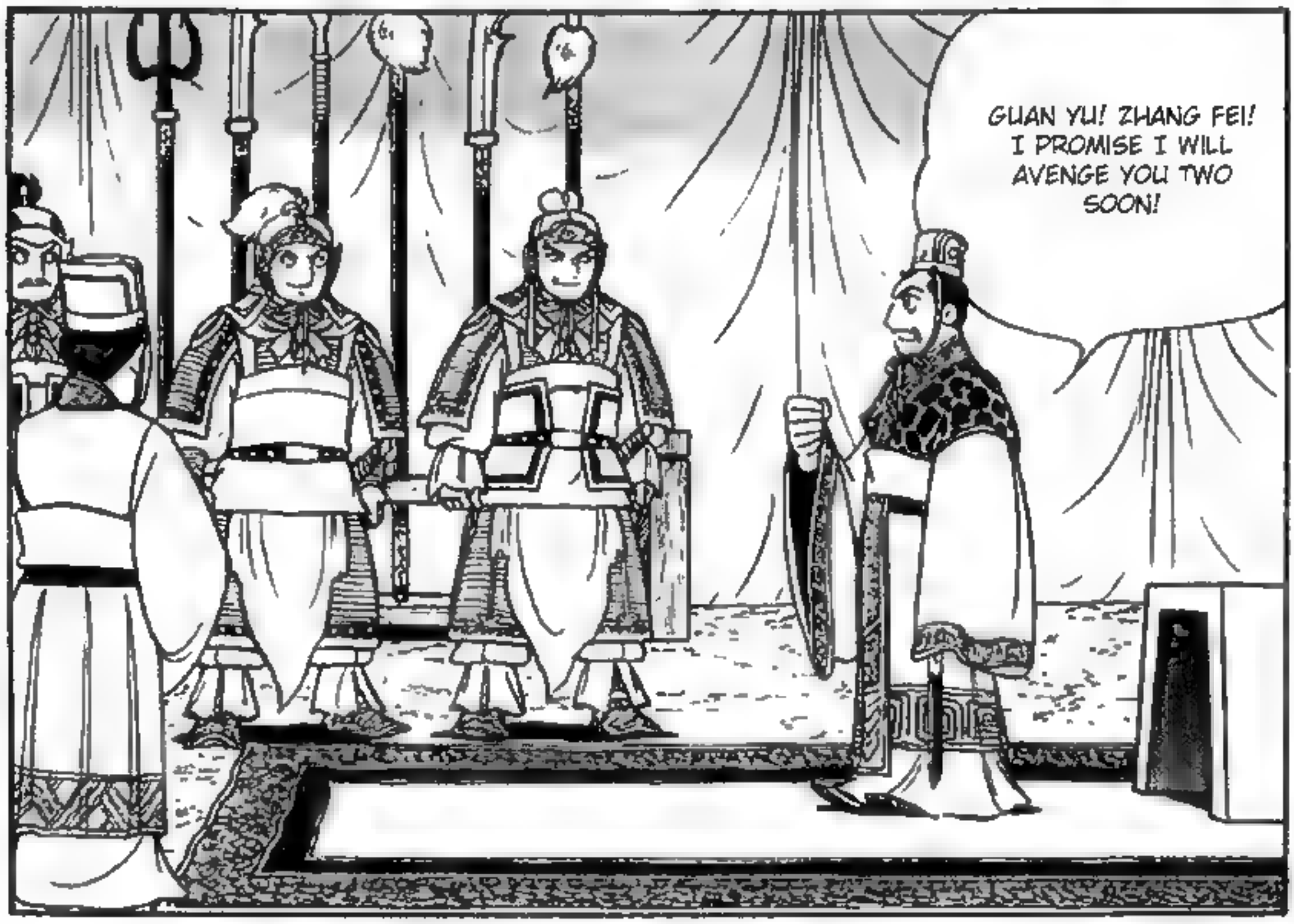
TO LIVE ALSO MEANS TO INCH CLOSER TO DEATH. THAT IS AN INCONTRO-VERTIBLE LAW OF THIS WORLD.

YES, DO NOT FRET, YOUR MAJESTY. THE CAMPAIGN HAS ONLY JUST BEGUN.

YOUR MAJESTY MUST NOT SPEAK IN SUCH A SOFT AND TIMID TONE.

PERHAPS I AM LETTING MY ANXIETIES OF BEING THE LAST BROTHER ALIVE GET THE BETTER OF ME.

YES, YOU'RE RIGHT.


GUAN YU! ZHANG FEI! I PROMISE I WILL AVENGE YOU TWO SOON!

THE 750,000 STRONG SHU ARMY CONTINUED ITS MARCH ONCE MORE
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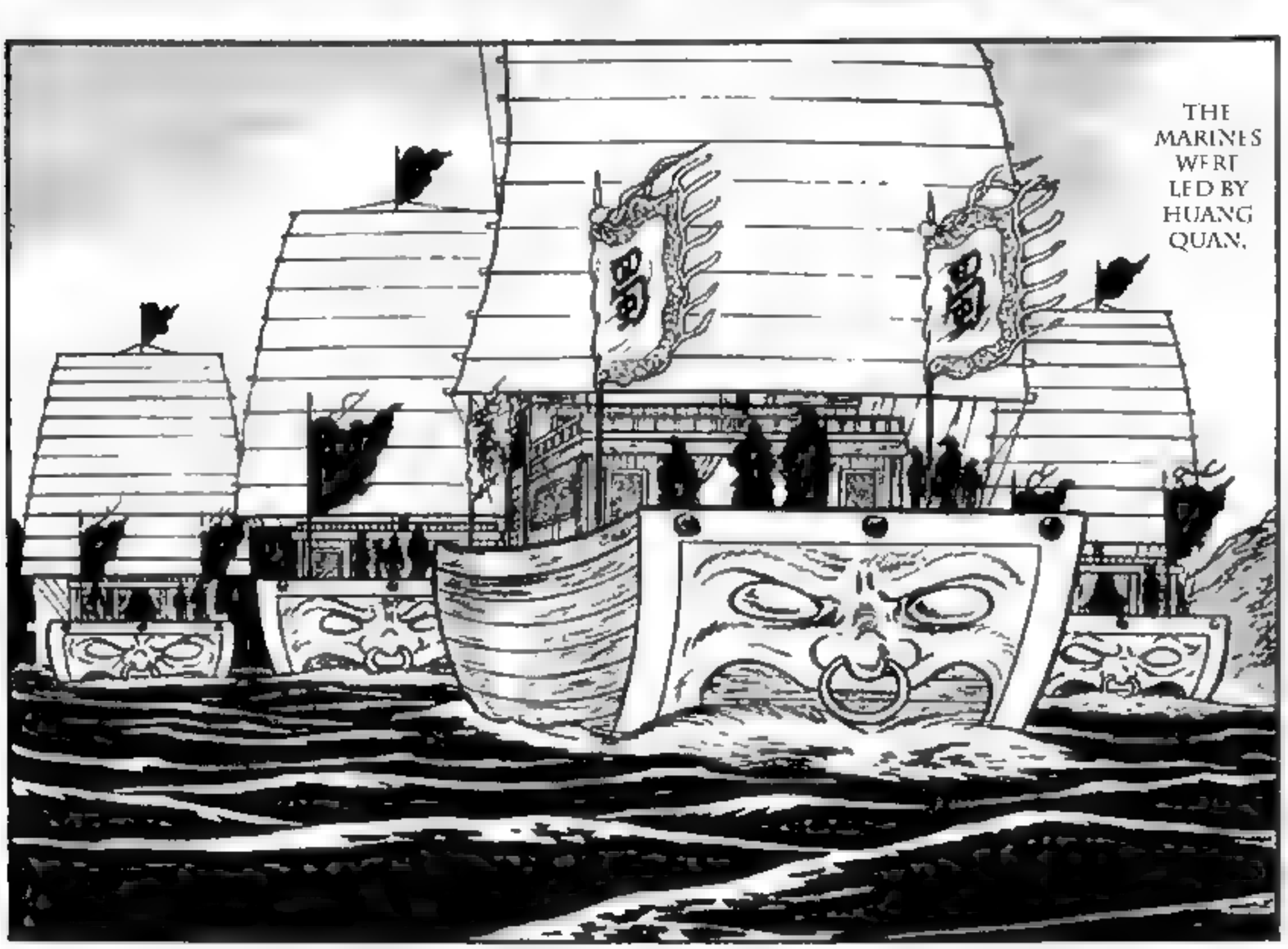
THE MARINES WERE LED BY HUANG QUAN.
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WHILE
LIU BEI
HIMSELF
LED THE
FORCES
ON
LAND

YES, SIR.

LIU BEI HIMSELF IS COMING AT THE HEAD OF AN ARMY!?

YES, SIR.

SEND THE SIGNAL TO MARCH OUT.

YES, SIR!
PREPARE TO MARCH OUT AGAINST THE ENEMIES!
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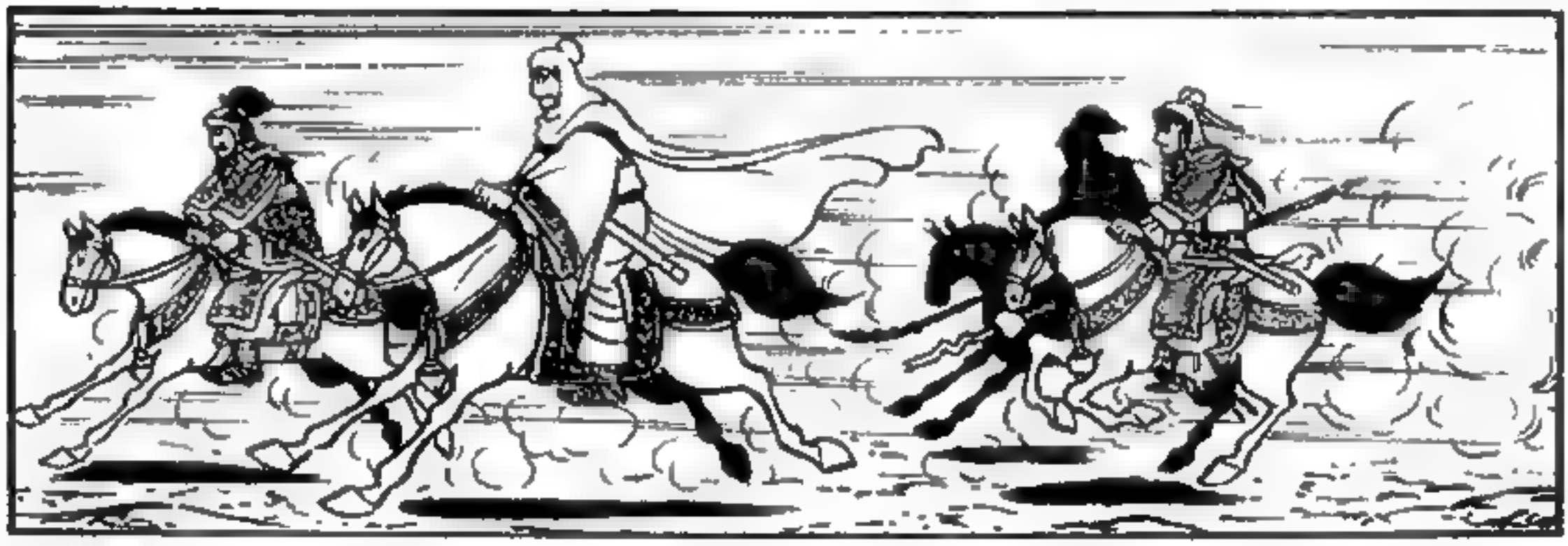
IS THAT SO?
WU FORCES SPOTTED AHEAD, YOUR MAJESTY!



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I SEE.

OVER THERE, YOUR MAJESTY.

YES, SIR.

HAN DANG AND ZHOU TAI'S FORCES, I SEE...

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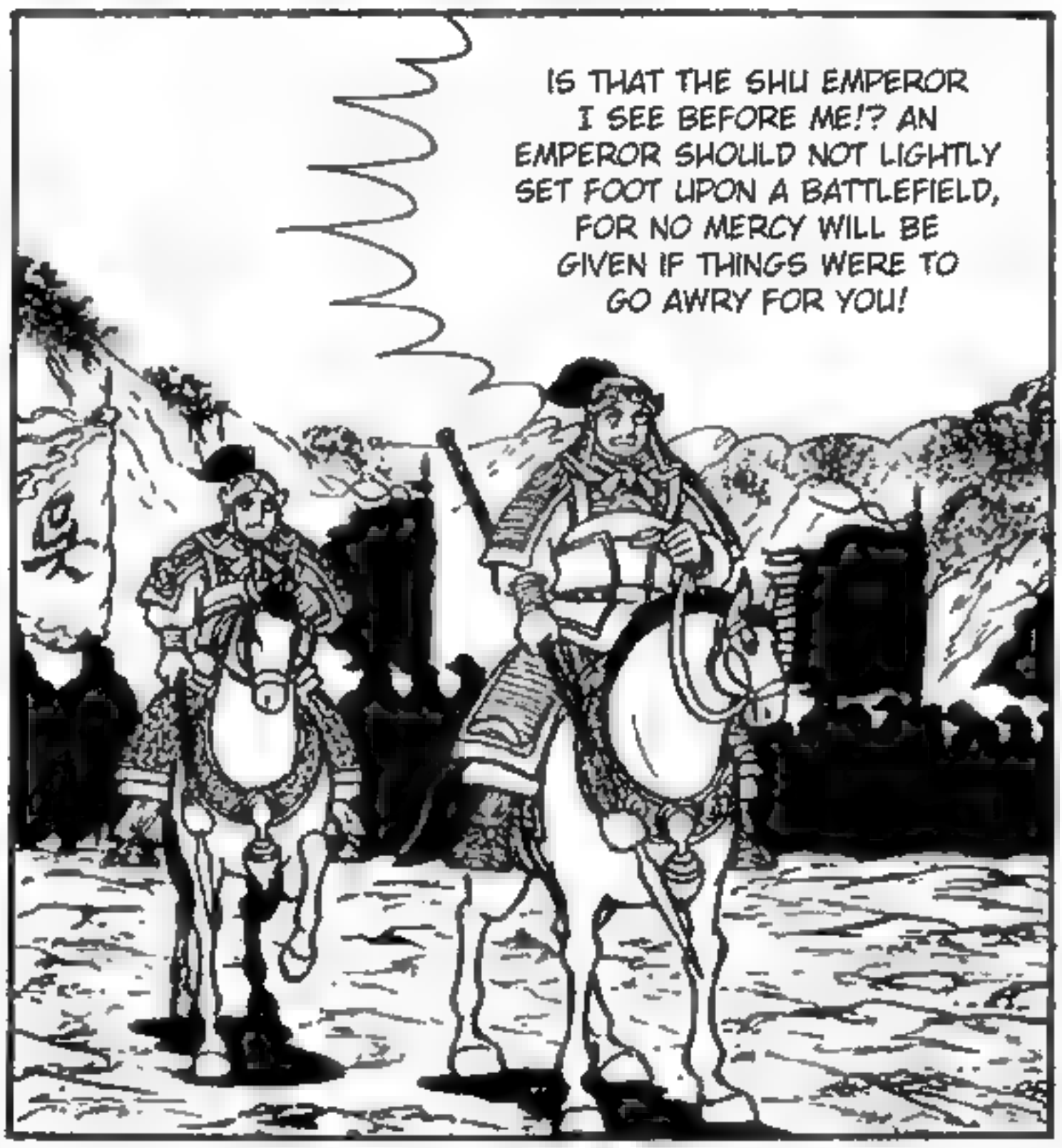
SILENCE! HAVING CAUSED THE DEATHS OF MY DEAR BROTHERS, WU WILL NOT SURVIVE MY WRATH!


IS THAT THE SHU EMPEROR I SEE BEFORE ME!? AN EMPEROR SHOULD NOT LIGHTLY SET FOOT UPON A BATTLEFIELD, FOR NO MERCY WILL BE GIVEN IF THINGS WERE TO GO AWRY FOR YOU!

I WILL NOT RETURN TO SHU UNTIL MY VENGEANCE IS COMPLETE!

IF YOU WILL NOT BACK DOWN, NEITHER SHALL WE!

ALLOW ME!

WHO WILL VOLUNTEER TO CRUSH THE MORALE OF THESE INVADERS!?

YES, SIR.

GOOD, SHOW THEM THE MIGHT OF OUR ARMY!

IS THERE ANY MAN IN SHU BRAVE ENOUGH TO CHALLENGE ME IN SINGLE COMBAT!?

YES, GO YOU TWO!

AND GUAN XING AS WELL!

ALLOW THIS ZHANG BAO TO ACCEPT THE CHALLENGE, YOUR MAJESTY!

HAHH!

AS WILL I, GUAN XING, SON OF GUAN YU!

ZHANG BAO, SON OF ZHANG FEI, WILL TAKE YOU UP ON YOUR CHALLENGE!

AGHH!

YOUR OPPONENT IS ME!

AHH!

NO, FIGHT ME INSTEAD!

FIGHT ME IF YOU DARE, HAN DANG! ZHOU TAI!

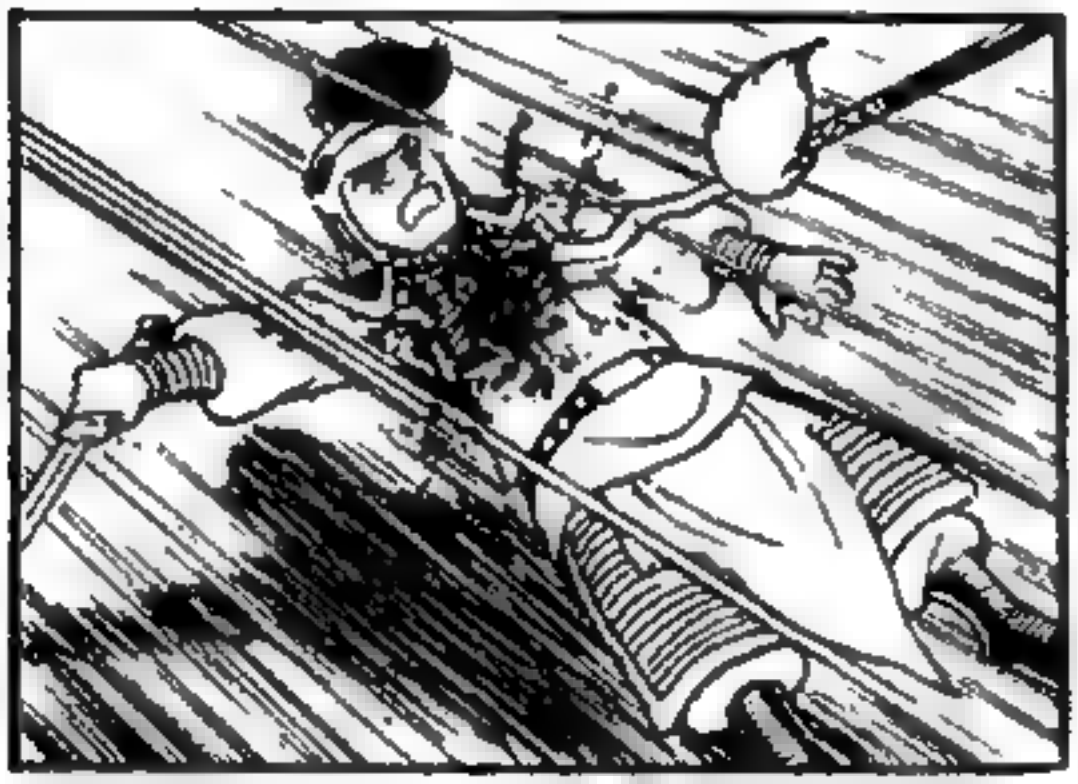
HA, AS IF THE CUBS OF TIGERS WOULD BE BESTED BY PUPS OF MUTTS!

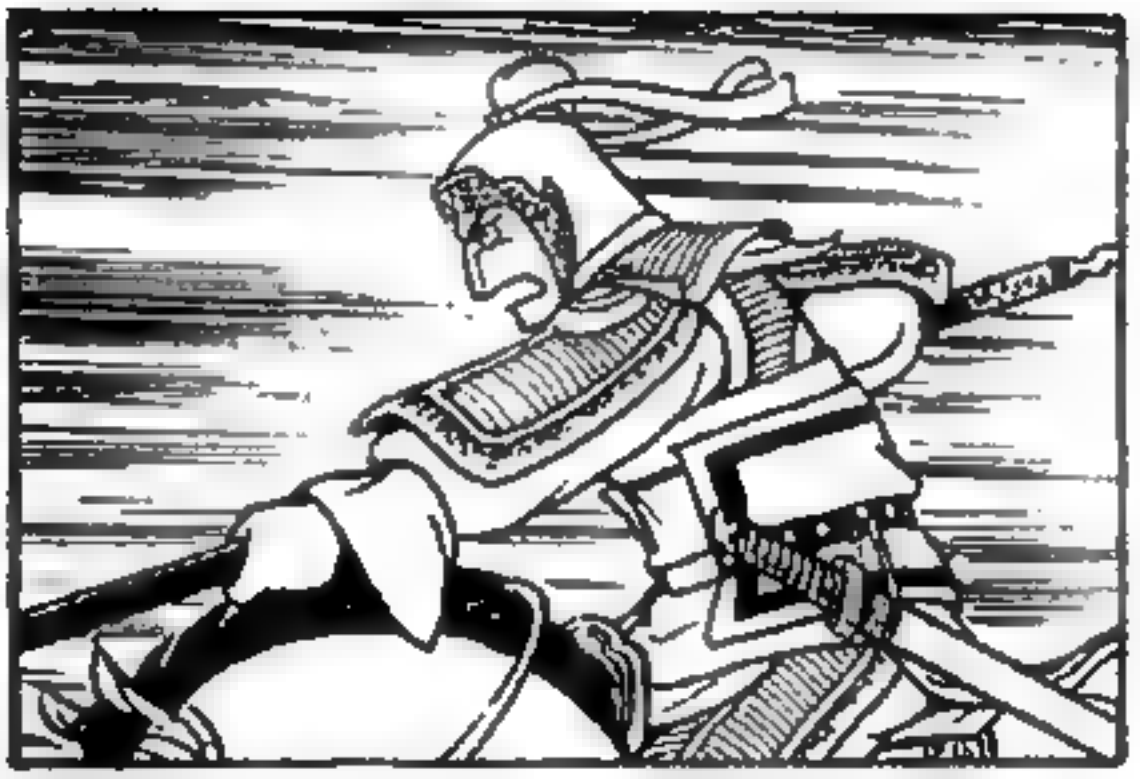
ATTACK! SURROUND THOSE TWO!

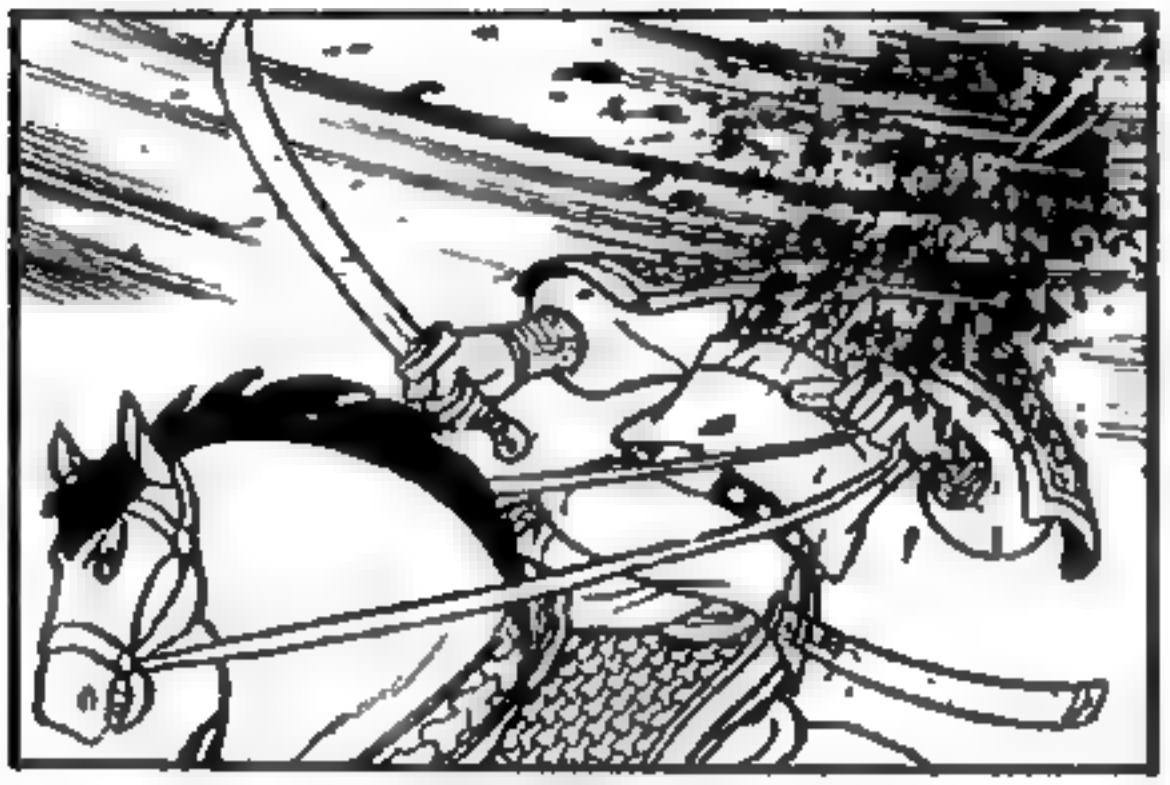
WHAT FEROCITY...

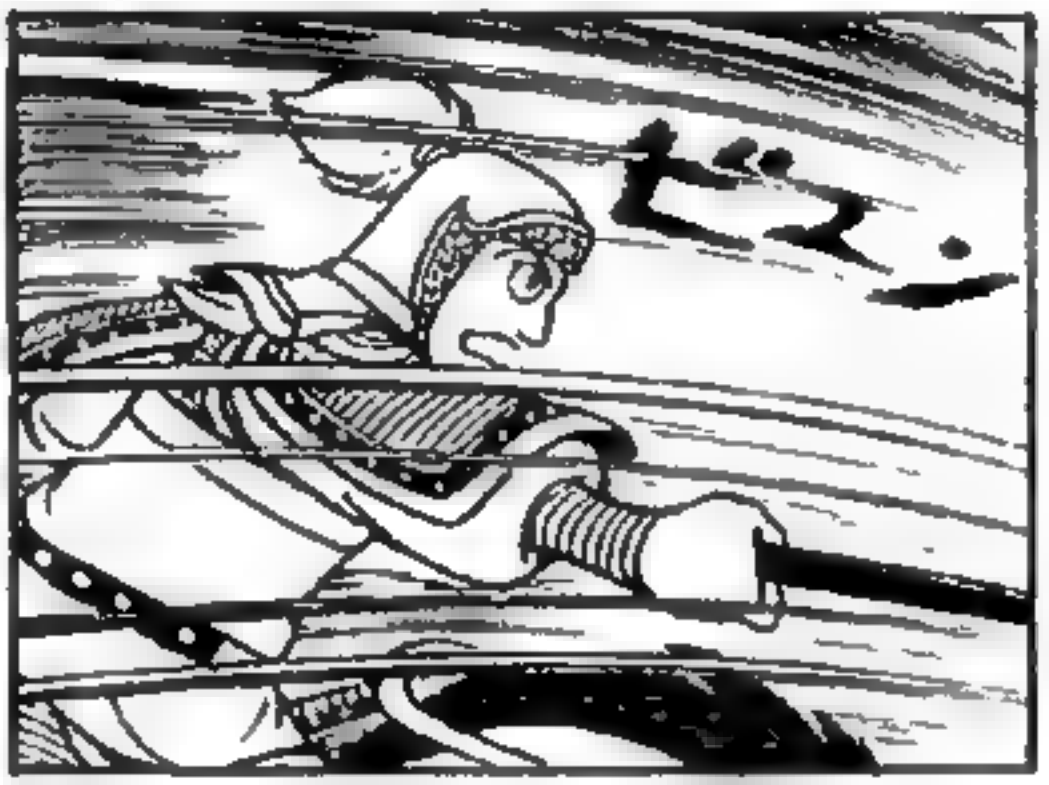
ATTACK! WE CANNOT LET THEM SURROUND OUR BRAVE HEROES!

ATTACK!









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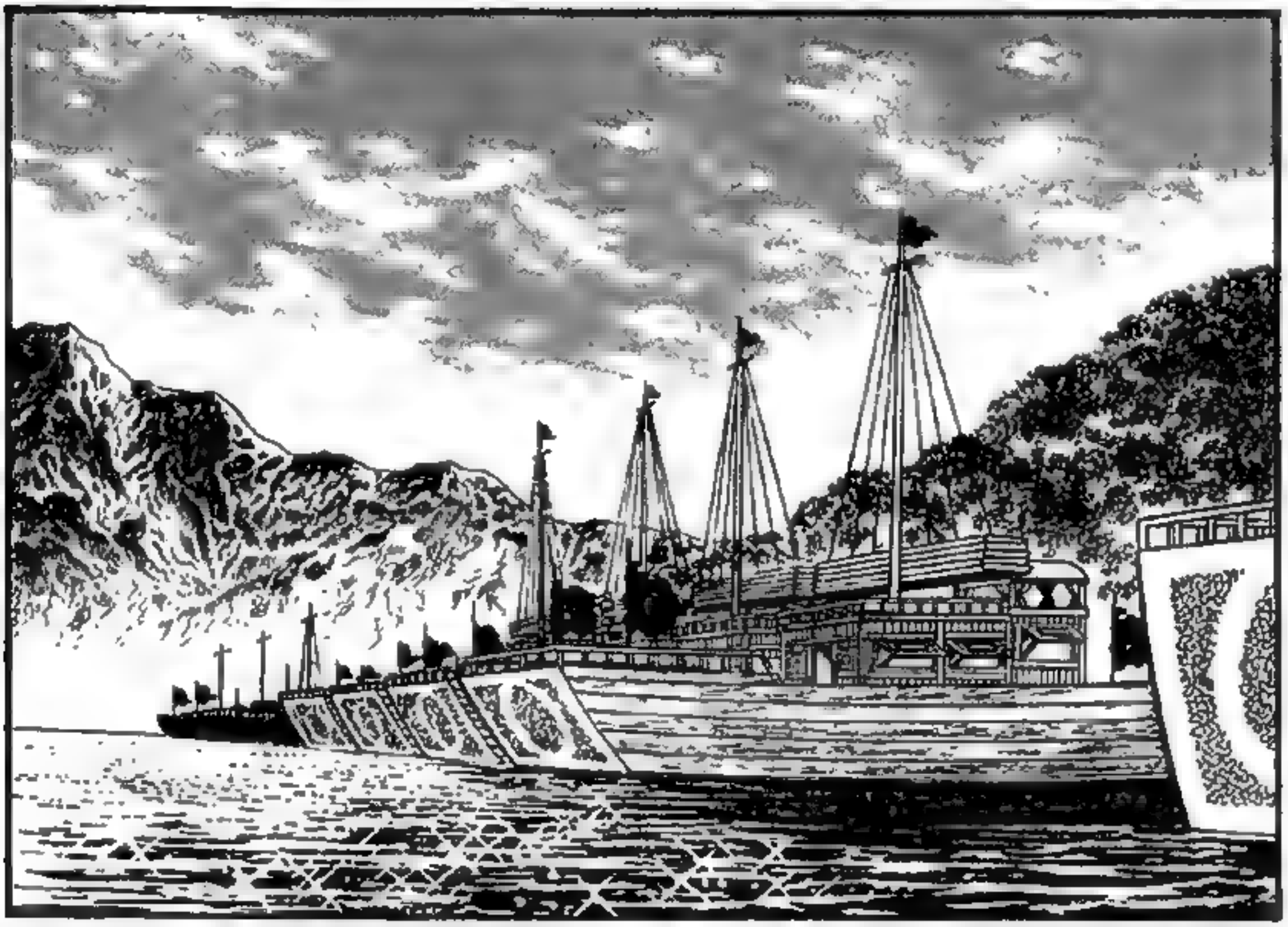


I HAVE BROUGHT YOU YOUR MEDICINE.

IT SEEMS MY AGED BODY NOW HAS TROUBLE JUST PASSING THE WINTER...

HOW ARE YOU FEELING TODAY, GENERAL GAN NING?
COUGH COUGH

WHAT!?

THE SHU FORCES HAVE ATTACKED AND OVERRAN OUR LINES! YOUR URGENT AID IS REQUESTED!

I BRING A REPORT, SIR!

THERE IS NO TIME FOR SUCH CONCERNS WHEN THE ENEMY IS UPON OUR GATES.

BUT SIR, YOUR HEA-TH...

I CANNOT STAY LYING DOWN. BRING ME MY ARMOUR.

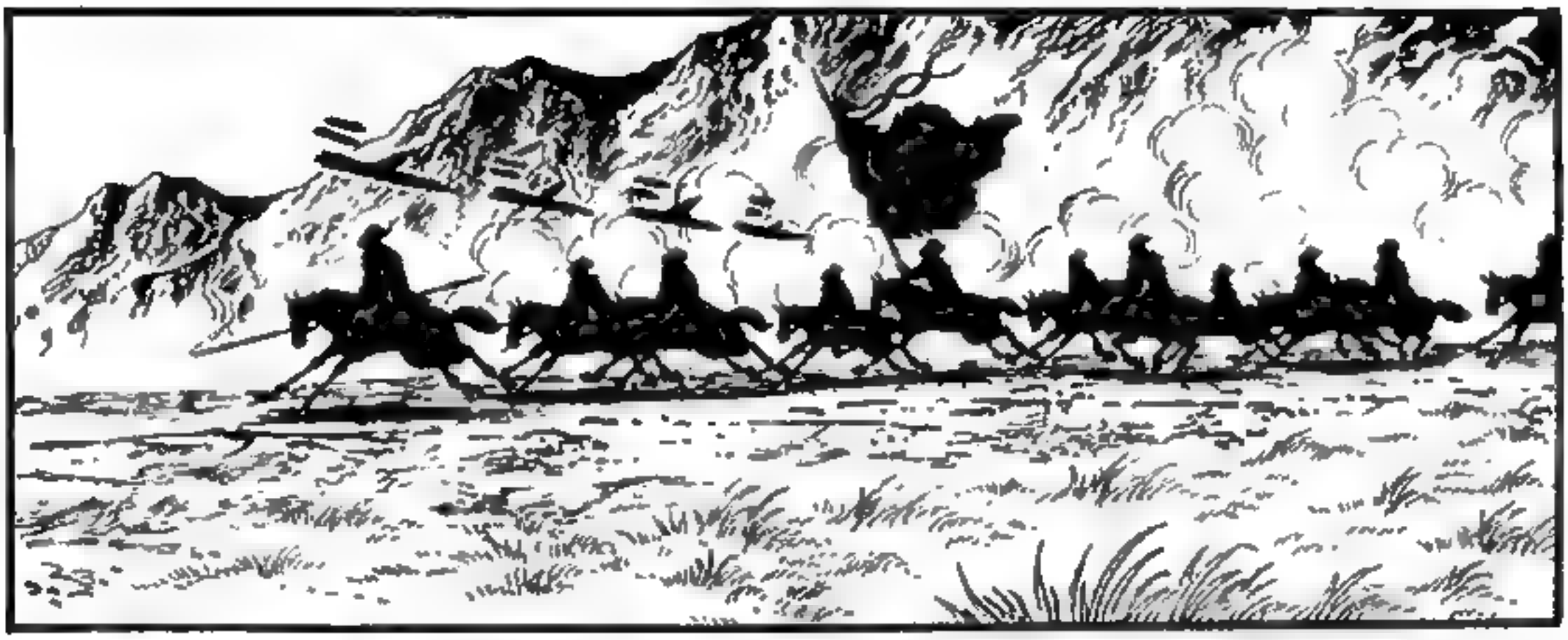
COUGH COUGH

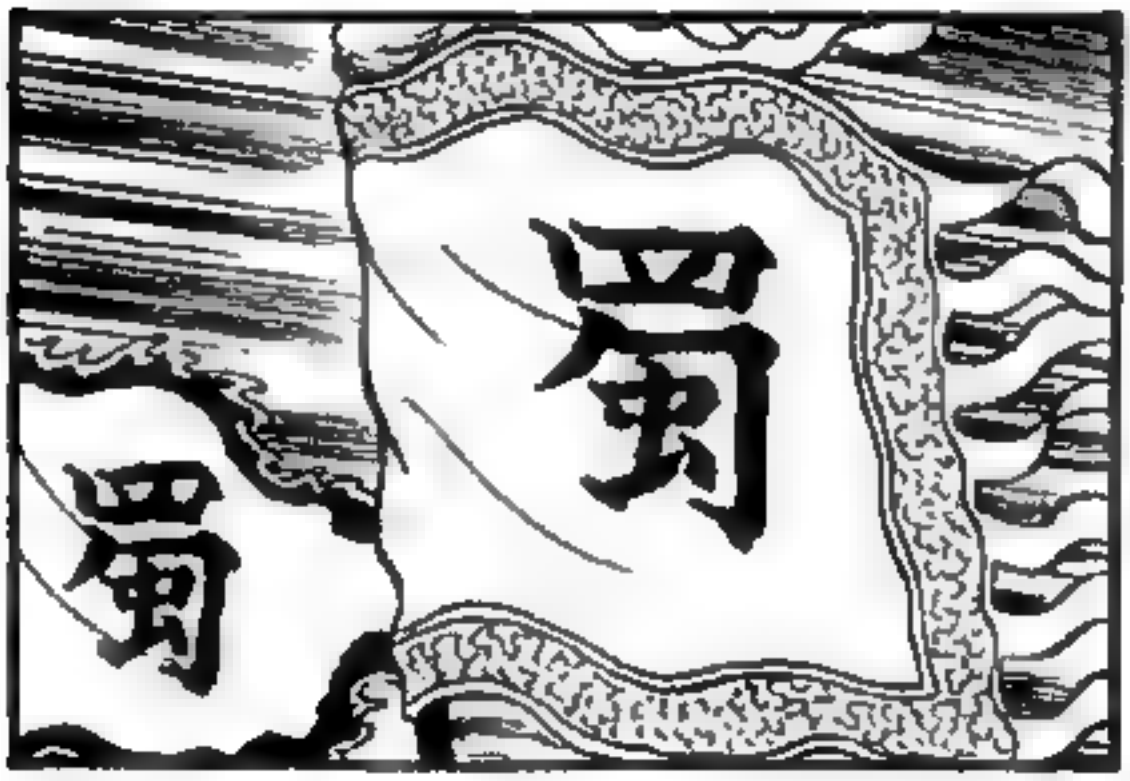
IT'S TIME FOR ME TO DO MY DUTIES

SIR!?

I'M FINE.

LET US
RUSH
TO AID!
甘
甘

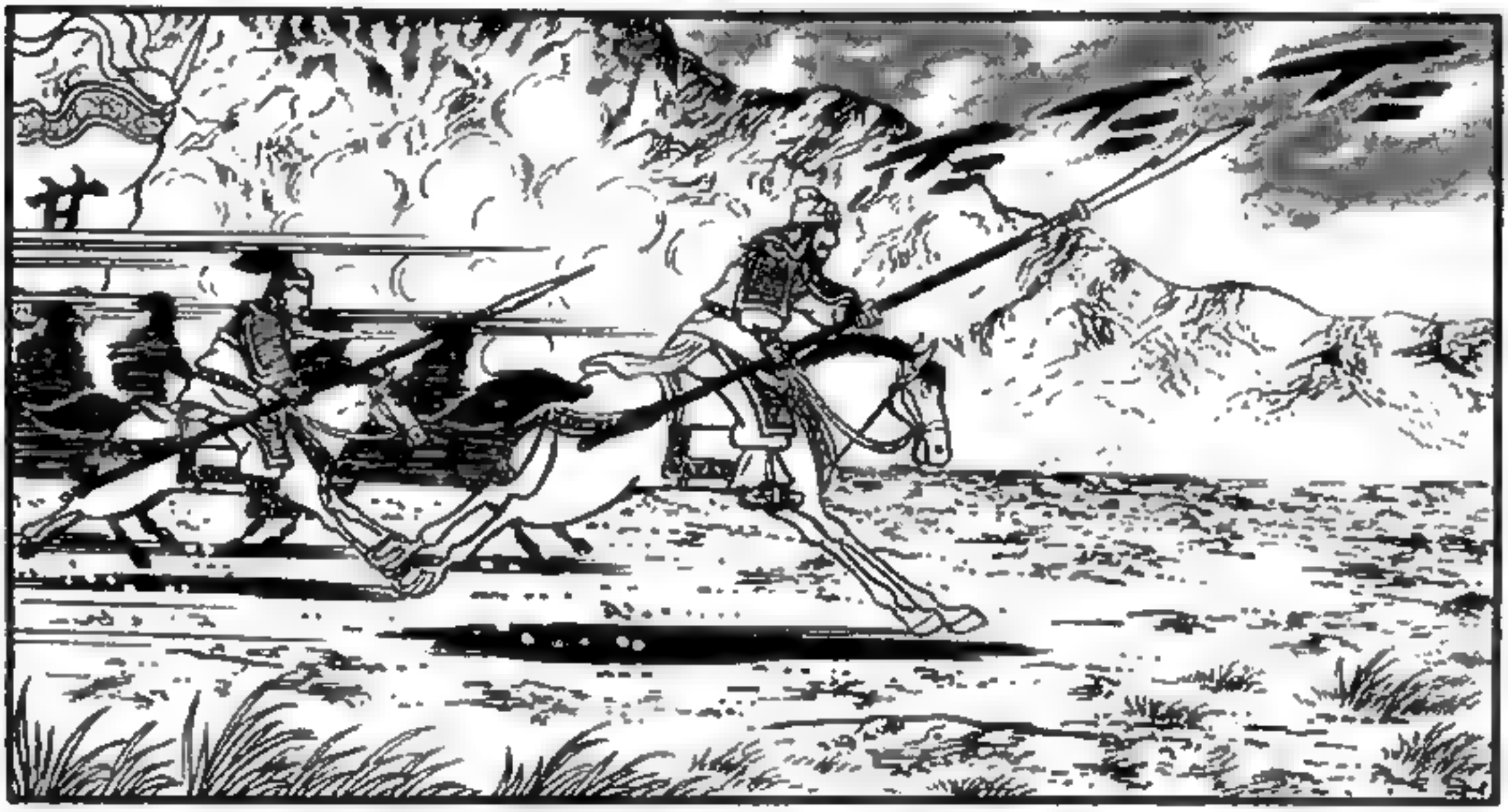




*SHU (蜀)

ATTACK!

甘
SHU FORCES ARE ALREADY HERE!?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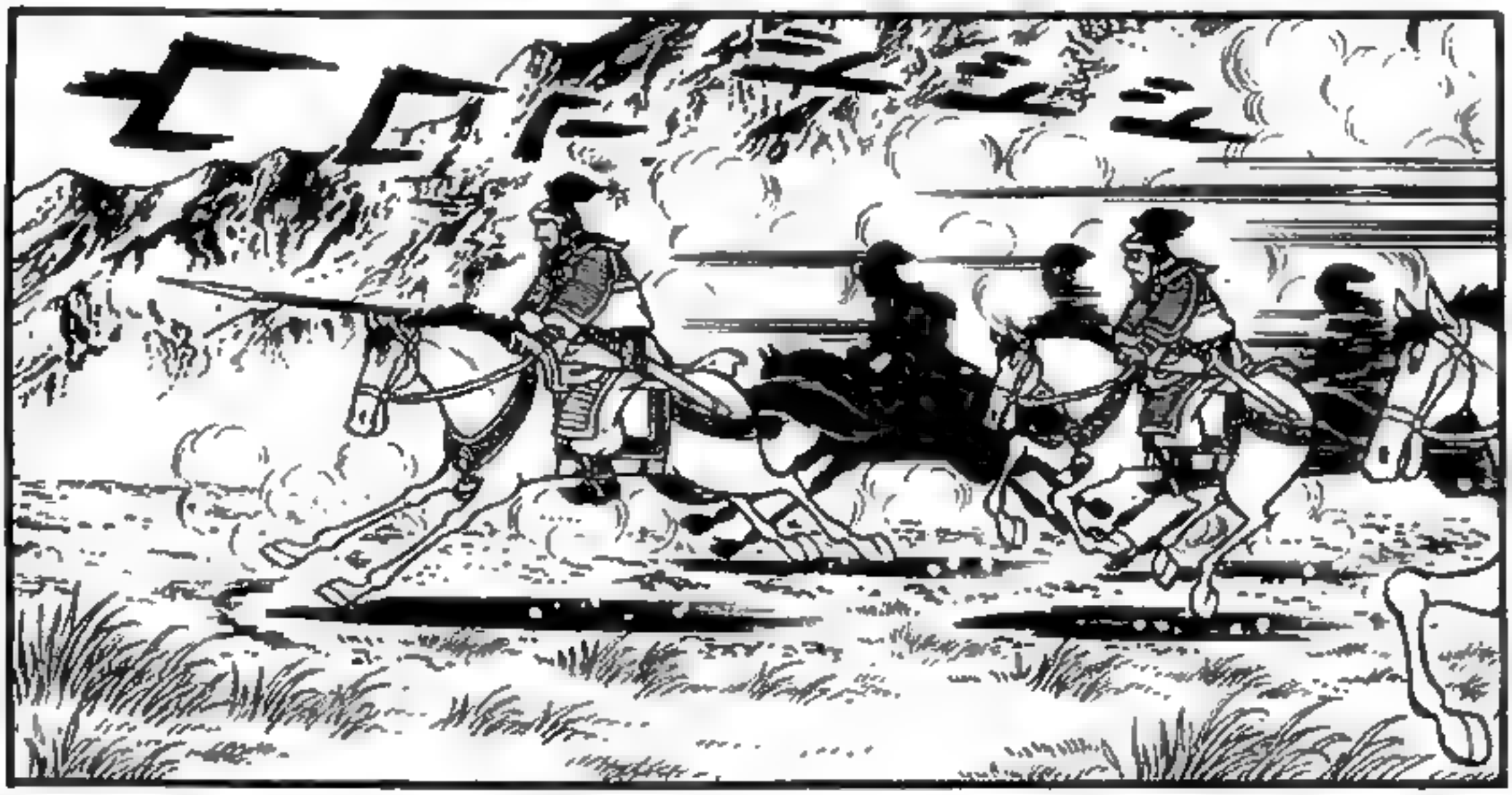


AGH!

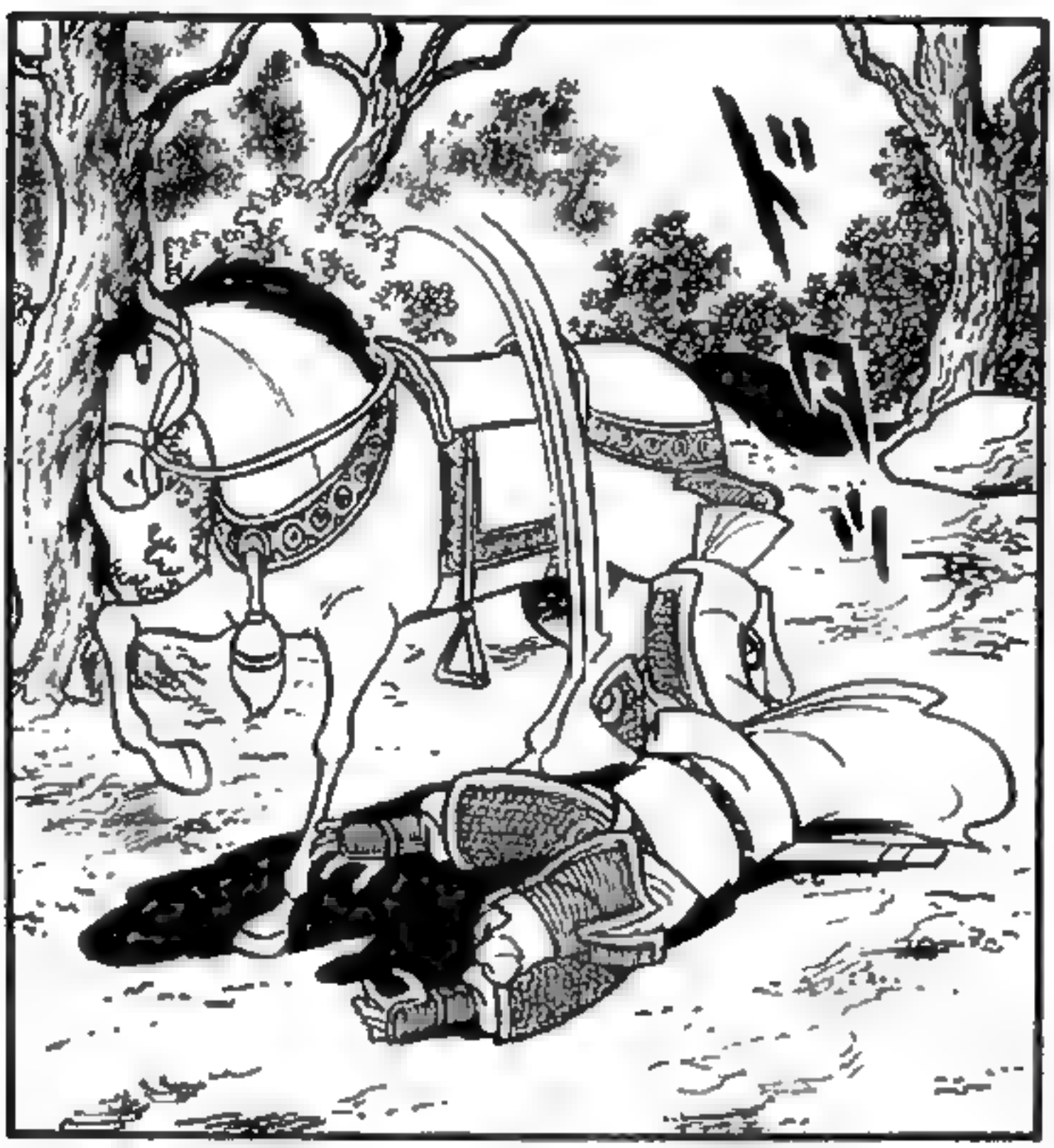
TAKE THE ENEMY GENERAL'S HEAD!

GENERAL!

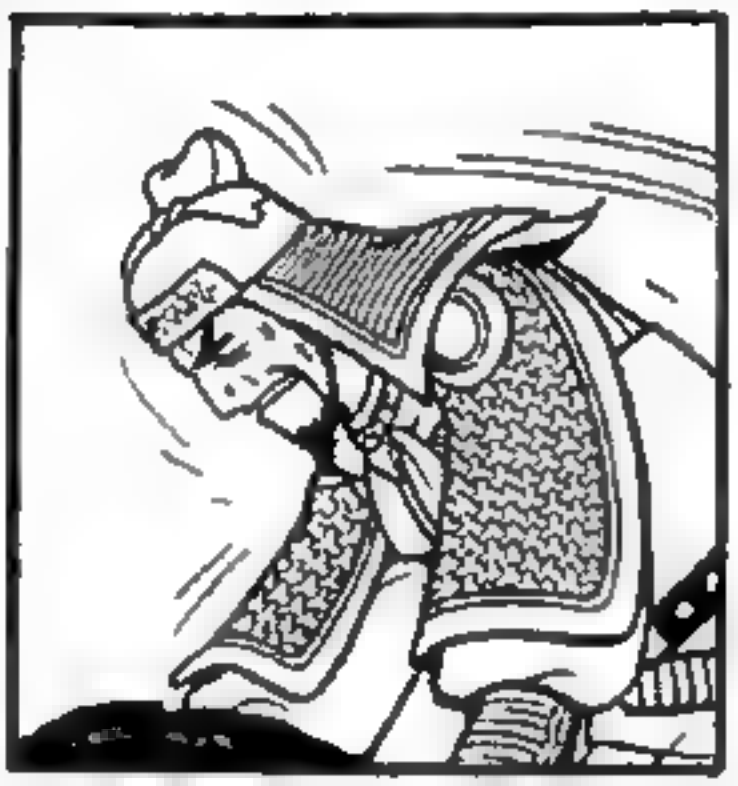
FEND THEM OFF, MEN!

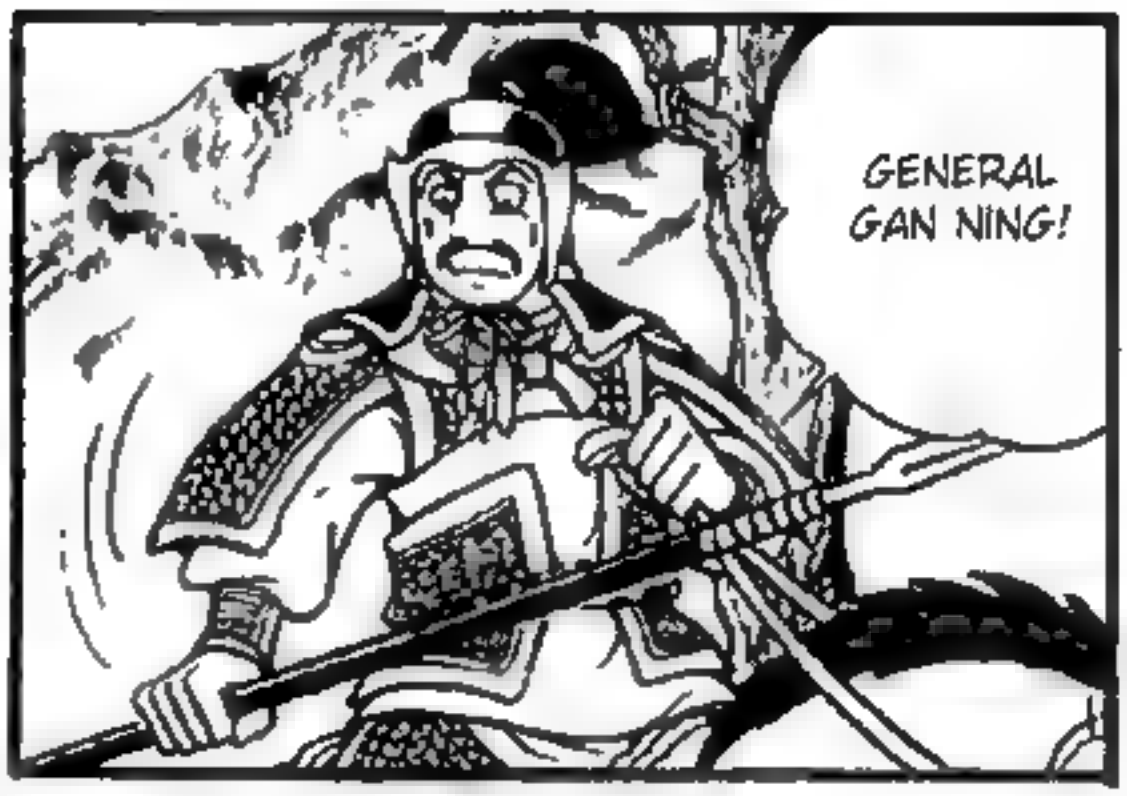
PLEASE RETREAT TO SAFETY, GENERAL!

HUFF HUFF
HUFF...



M... MY
EYES...
TOO DIM...
CAN'T...
SEE...




GENERAL GAN NING!

IT SEEMS THIS IS FATED TO BE MY GRAVE...

DO NOT UTTER SUCH WEAK WORDS, GENERAL!

NGHH...
PLEASE WAKE UP, GENERAL!

NO, I AM DONE FOR. MY EYES GHT IS ALREADY LOST. JUST LET ME REST.

WE WERE WRONG TO EXECUTE GUAN YU...

THEN TAKE A SHORT REST BY THIS TREE, SIR.

BUT ARE WE NOT ALLIED WITH WEI?

WITH SHU AND WU NOW LOCKED IN A MORTAL STRUGGLE, I WORRY WEI WILL TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS CHAOS...

MANY MORE GENERALS WILL SURELY FOLLOW ME TO DEATH IN THE NEAR FUTURE...

HAHA, PROMISES ARE MADE TO BE BROKEN IN AN AGE OF WAR...

AH!

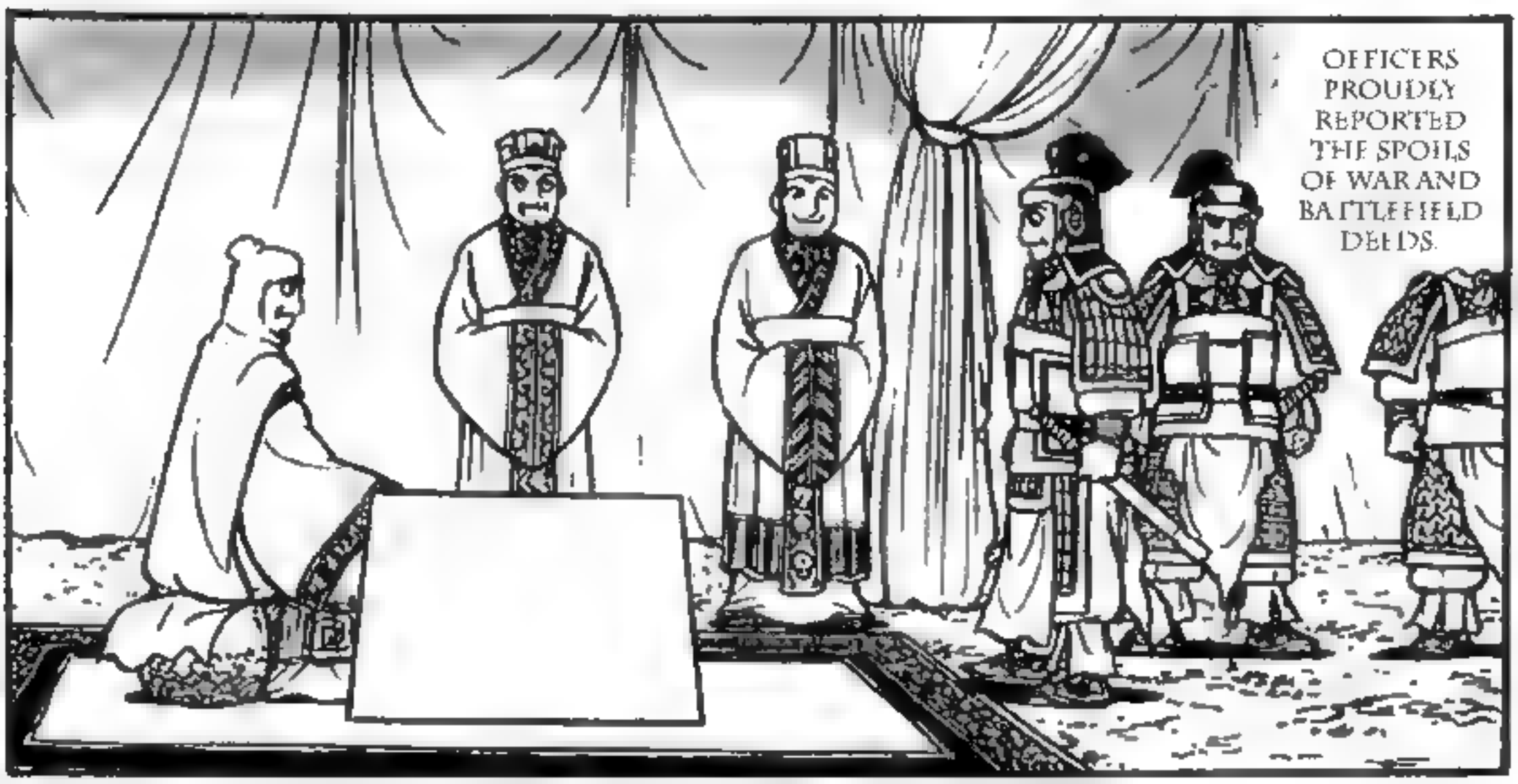
SIR?

SIR!

BUT GAN NING HAD ALREADY DRAWN HIS LAST BREATH.
PLEASE WAKE UP, GENERAL!

THE WU FORCES WERE HANDILY BEATEN THAT DAY. CORPSES OF WU SOLDIERS WERE STREWN ACROSS THE WHOLE FIELD AND THE RIVERS RAN RED WITH THEIR BLOOD

ONE STEP CLOSER TO REVENGE



NOW THAT I THINK OF IT...

HM?

WHERE IS GUAN XING? I DON'T SEE HIM ANYWHERE.

HM...

I LAST SAW HIM CHASING AFTER SOMEONE THAT LOOKED LIKE THE ENEMY GENERAL WHEN THE ENEMIES BEGAN TO ROUT...

YES.

ZHANG BAO, LEAD A SEARCH PARTY FOR HIM.

I CERTAINLY HOPE HE'S ONLY LOST HIS WAY AND NOT FALLEN IN BATTLE.

GUAN XING HAD BEEN BUSY CHASING AFTER THE ENEMY GENERAL PAN ZHANG ALL THIS TIME
HIS FIXATION ON PAN ZHANG WAS BECAUSE THE LATTER HAD LED THE GROUP OF AMBUSHERS AT MAICHENG WHICH CAUGHT GUAN YU

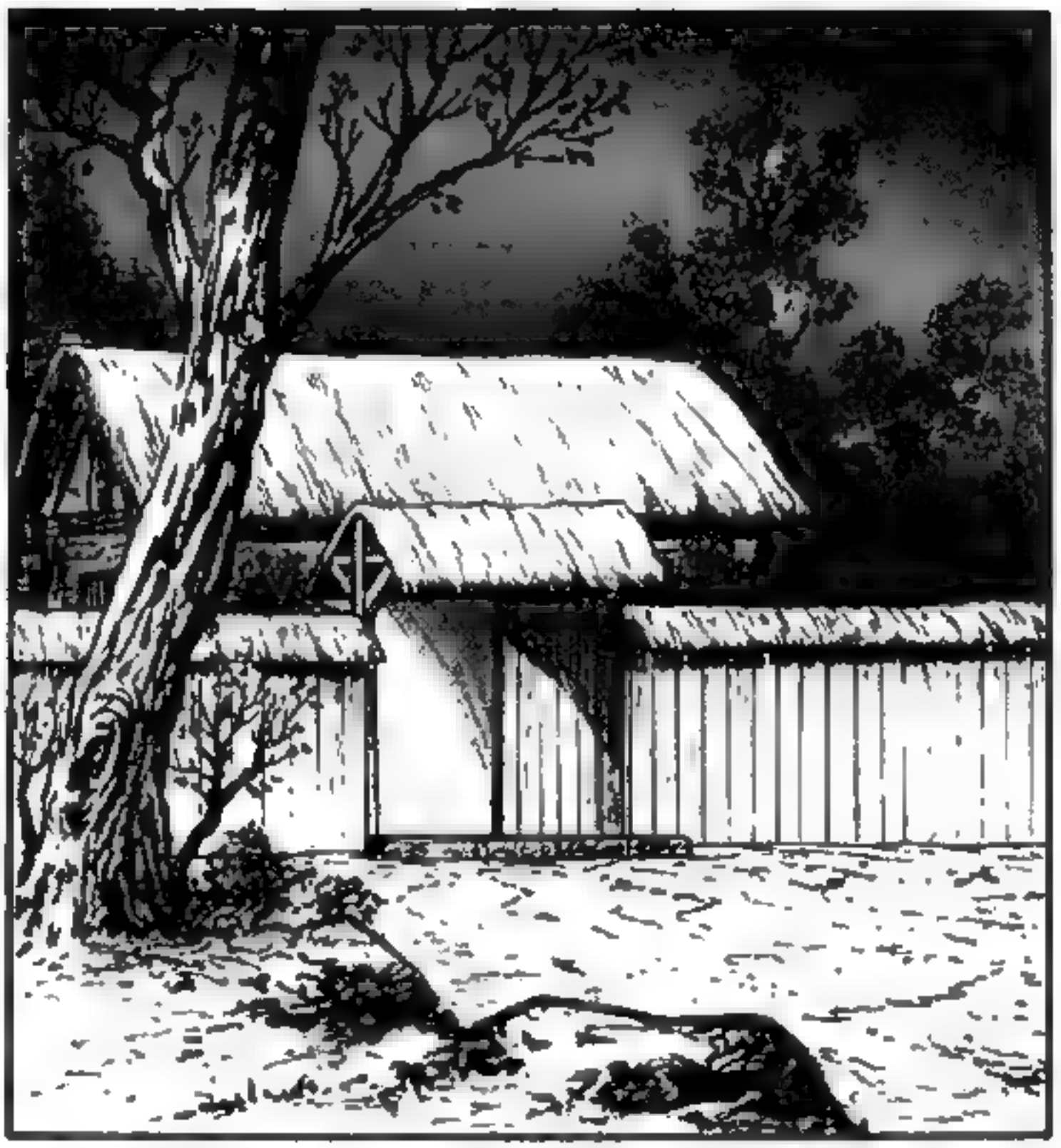
DAMN IT, I'VE LOST ALL SIGHT OF HIM.

THAT'S ENOUGH

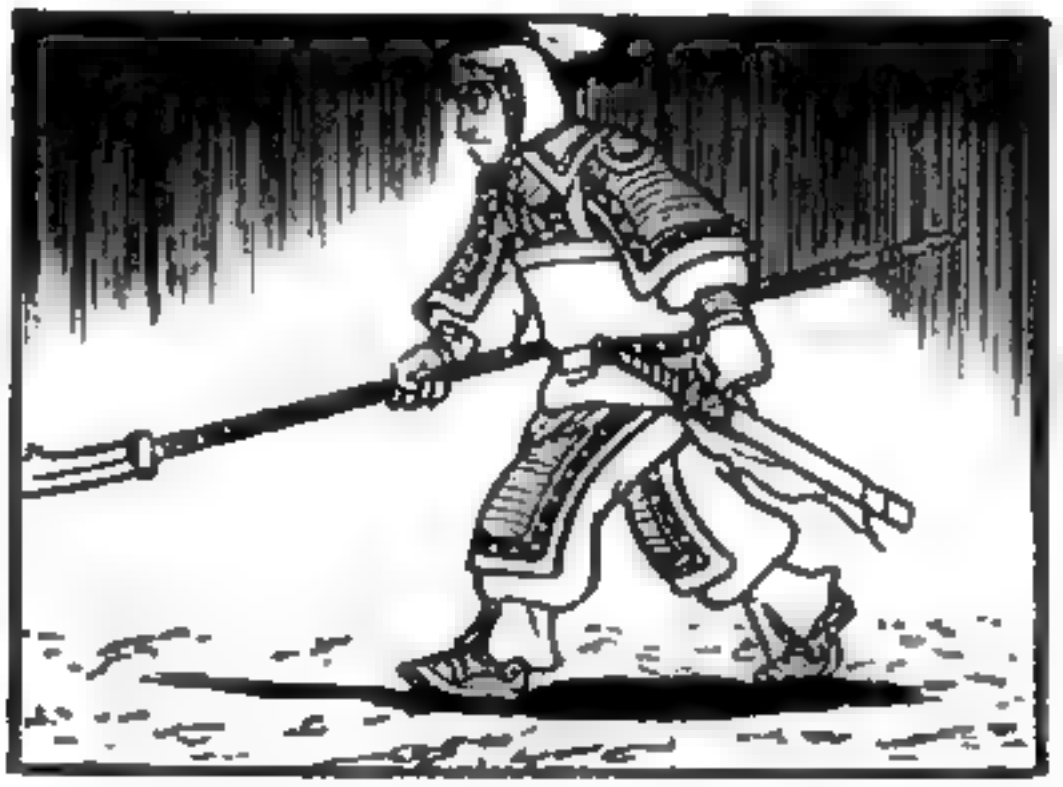
IT'S TOO DARK TO SEARCH FOR ANYONE NOW.

HM?

AH GOOD, A HOUSE. I CAN ASK FOR FOOD AND DRINKS.



PARDON MY INTRUSION.



I AM A WARRIOR WHO'S LOST HIS WAY AFTER A BATTLE AND HUMBLY ASKS FOR FOOD.

WHOM MIGHT YOU BE, SIR?

EXCUSE ME THEN.
WELL, IN THAT CASE, PLEASE COME INSIDE.

AHH!

HM?

WHY DO YOU HAVE A PAINTING OF MY FATHER IN YOUR HOME?

WHAT? YOU SAY YOU ARE GUAN YU'S SON?

THAT IS MY FATHER, GUAN YU.

THESE LANDS WERE ONCE ADMINISTERED BY YOUR LATE FATHER. WHEN HE WAS ALIVE, WE ALL DEEPLY RESPECTED HIM FOR HIS JUST RULE, AND NOW THAT HE IS A SPIRIT IN THE AFTERLIFE, IT IS ONLY PROPER THAT WE REVERE HIM MORE.

THIS IS ALL QUITE CONFUSING, I MUST CONFESS.

PARDON MY IGNORANCE THEN.

YOUR WORDS MAKE HIS SON DEEPLY GRATEFUL.

IT IS GOOD TO SEE THAT THE ARMIES OF SHU HAVE FINALLY COME TO AVENGE HIS DEATH.

MMM, DELICIOUS.

THANK YOU. I MUST ADMIT I'M QUITE STARVED AFTER A LONG DAY'S BATTLE.

PLEASE, HAVE A DRINK. IT IS MY HONOUR TO SERVE YOU.

OPEN UP!

YES, WHOM MIGHT YOU BE, SIR?

A LOT OF VISITORS TONIGHT, IT SEEMS.

I AM THE WU GENERAL, PAN ZHANG. AS I HAVE LOST MY WAY IN THE DARK, I REQUEST TO SPEND THE NIGHT IN YOUR HOME.

PAN ZHANG!?

WHAT FOR-TUITOUS TURN OF EVENTS!

HM?

THANK YOU.
VERY WELL, COME INSIDE THEN.

GUAN YU'S SON!?
WELL MET, PAN ZHANG! I AM GUAN XING, SECOND SON OF GUAN YU!

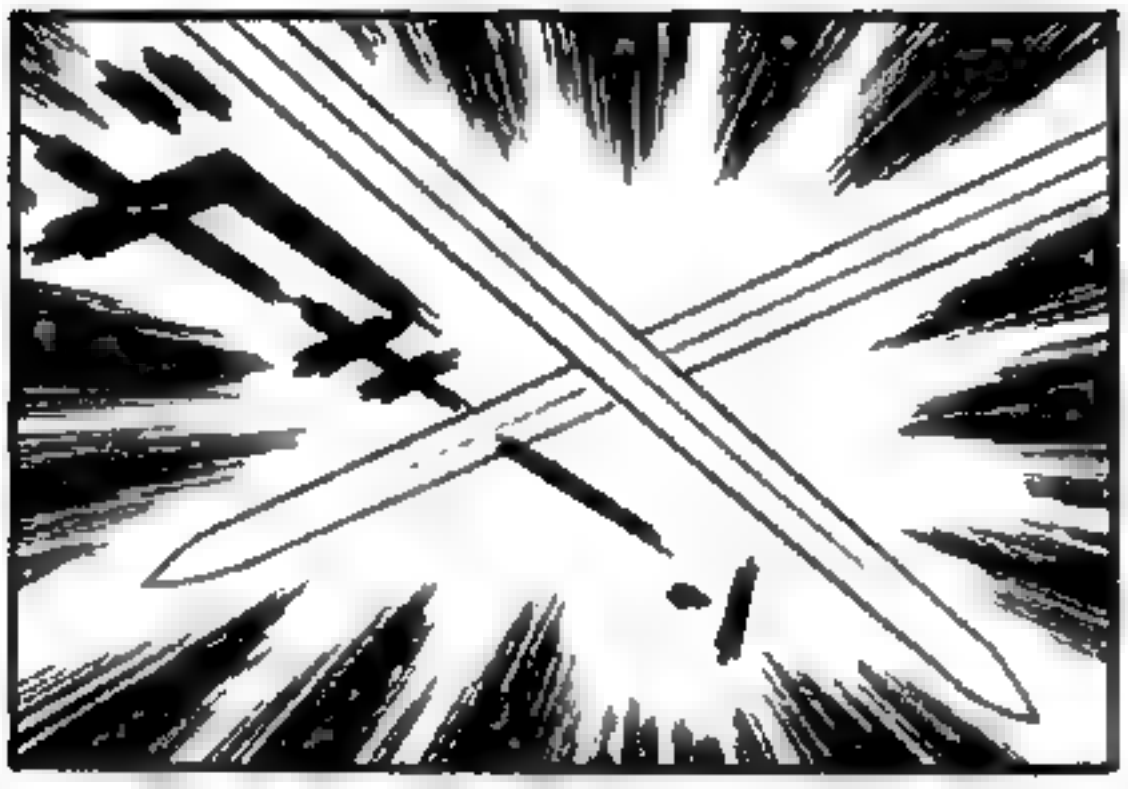
INDEED, IT WAS I WHO LED THE AMBUSHERS WHO CAUGHT GUAN YU!

I HEARD YOU WERE THE ONE WHO AMBUSHED AND CAPUTRED MY FATHER! DO YOU ADMIT THIS!?

HMPH! I'D LIKE TO SEE YOU TRY!

I THANK MY FATHER'S SPIRIT FOR LEADING YOU HERE TONIGHT SO THAT I CAN TAKE YOUR HEAD AND APPEASE HIM!

PRE-PARE YOUR-SELF!



NGHI

THIS IS FOR MY FATHER!

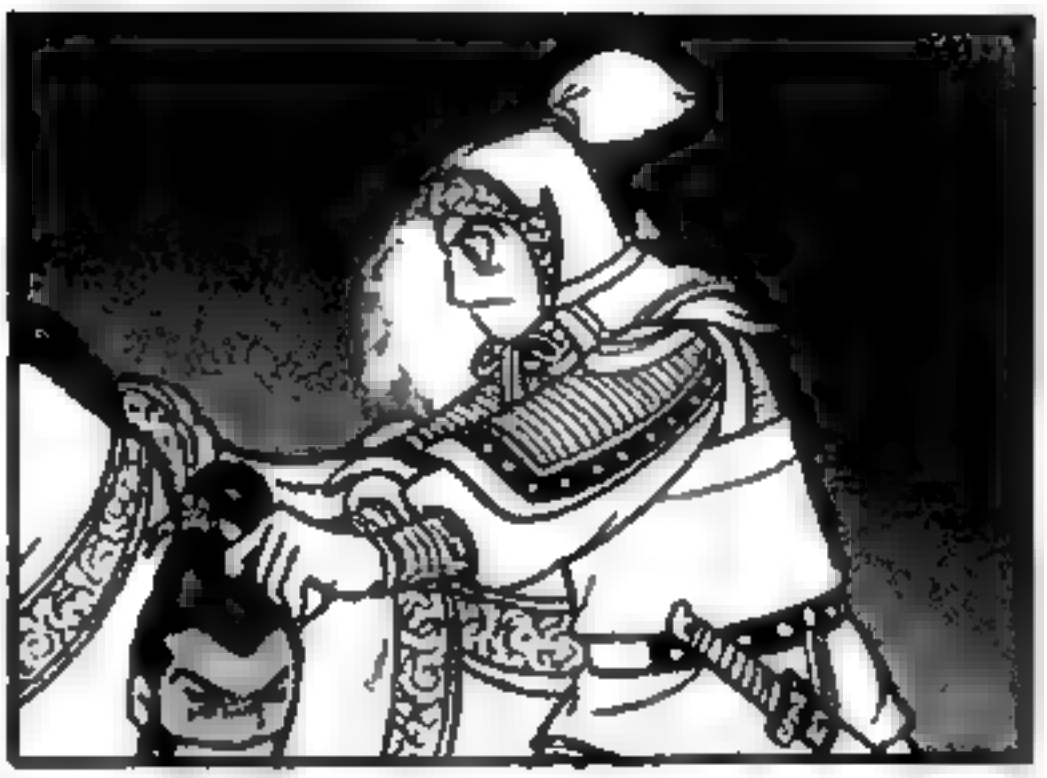
NGH...

I DID IT! I AM ONE STEP CLOSER TO FULLY AVENGING MY FATHER!

CONGRATULATIONS, SIR.

I MUST GO PRESENT THIS HEAD BEFORE MY FATHER'S GRAVE IF EVEN A MOMENT SOONER. THANK YOU FOR YOUR HOSPITALITY TONIGHT.

THANK YOU FOR EVERY-THING.



HM?

THAT'S PAN ZHANG'S FLAG! THEY MUST BE HIS TROOPS!

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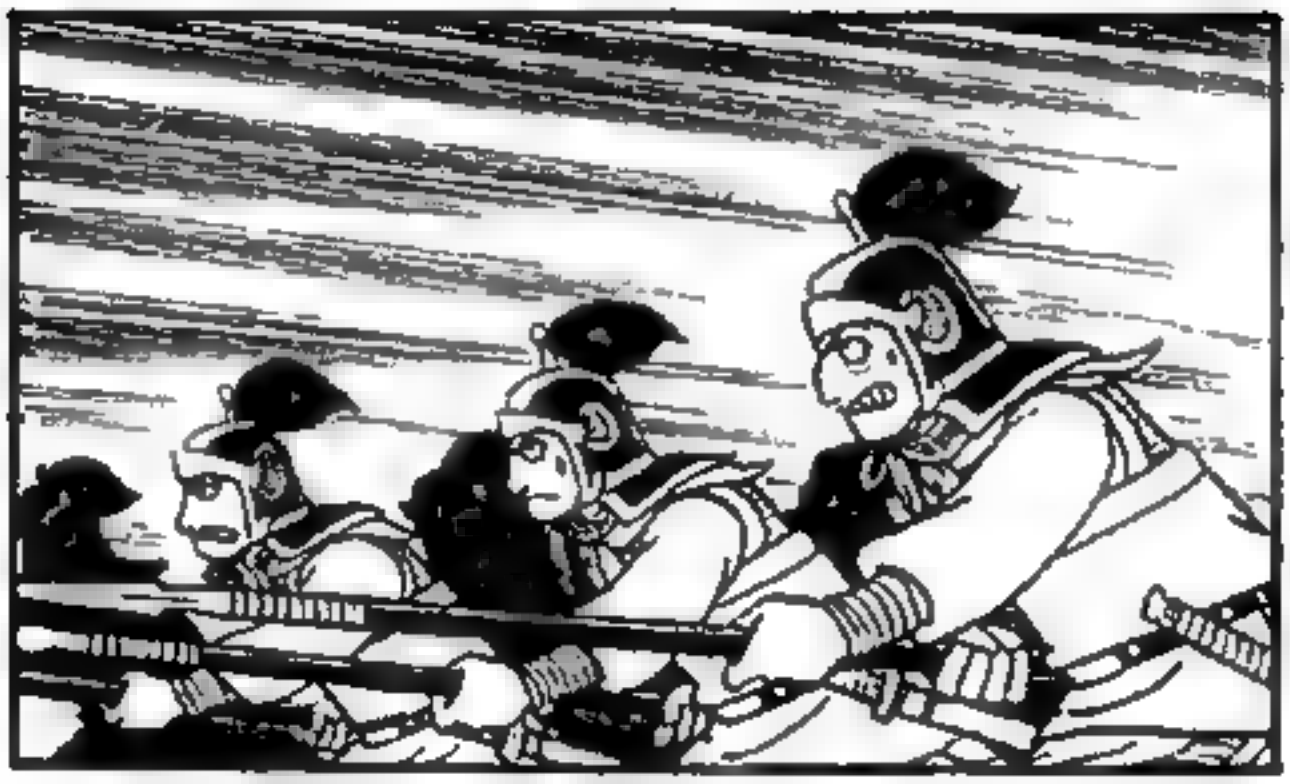
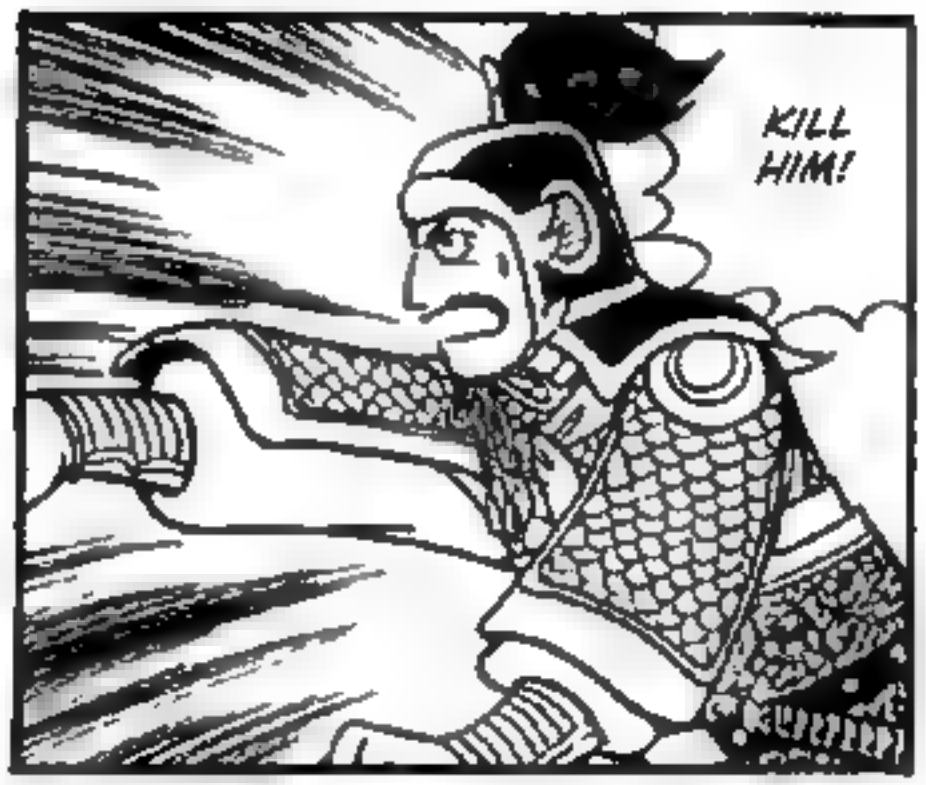
HM?

HE'S SLAIN OUR GENERAL!?

G-GENERAL PAN ZHANG!?




KILL HIM!

HAHH!

IS THAT A FRIEND OR FOE I SEE FIGHTING BEFORE ME?

HM?

AH!

GUAN XING! YOU'RE ALIVE!

ZHANG BAO!

RESCUE GUAN XING!

AHHH!

RETREAT!
RETREAT!

DO NOT PURSUE THEM!
OUR MISSION IS
COMPLETE SO WE
SHOULD HASTEN BACK
TO CAMP!

BUT LOOK AT THIS! I'VE KILLED ONE OF THE MEN RESPONSIBLE FOR MY FATHER'S DEATH.

FORGIVE ME.

WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN? HIS MAJESTY WAS QUITE WORRIED ABOUT YOU.

THIS IS THE HEAD OF GENERAL PAN ZHANG!

I SEE... SO YOU'VE MANAGED TO KILL ONE...

I TOO WISH I COULD FIND THE ONES RESPONSIBLE FOR MY FATHER'S DEATH AND BRING THEM TO JUSTICE.

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YES, YOUR MAJESTY.

YOU'VE BROUGHT BACK PAN ZHANG'S HEAD!?

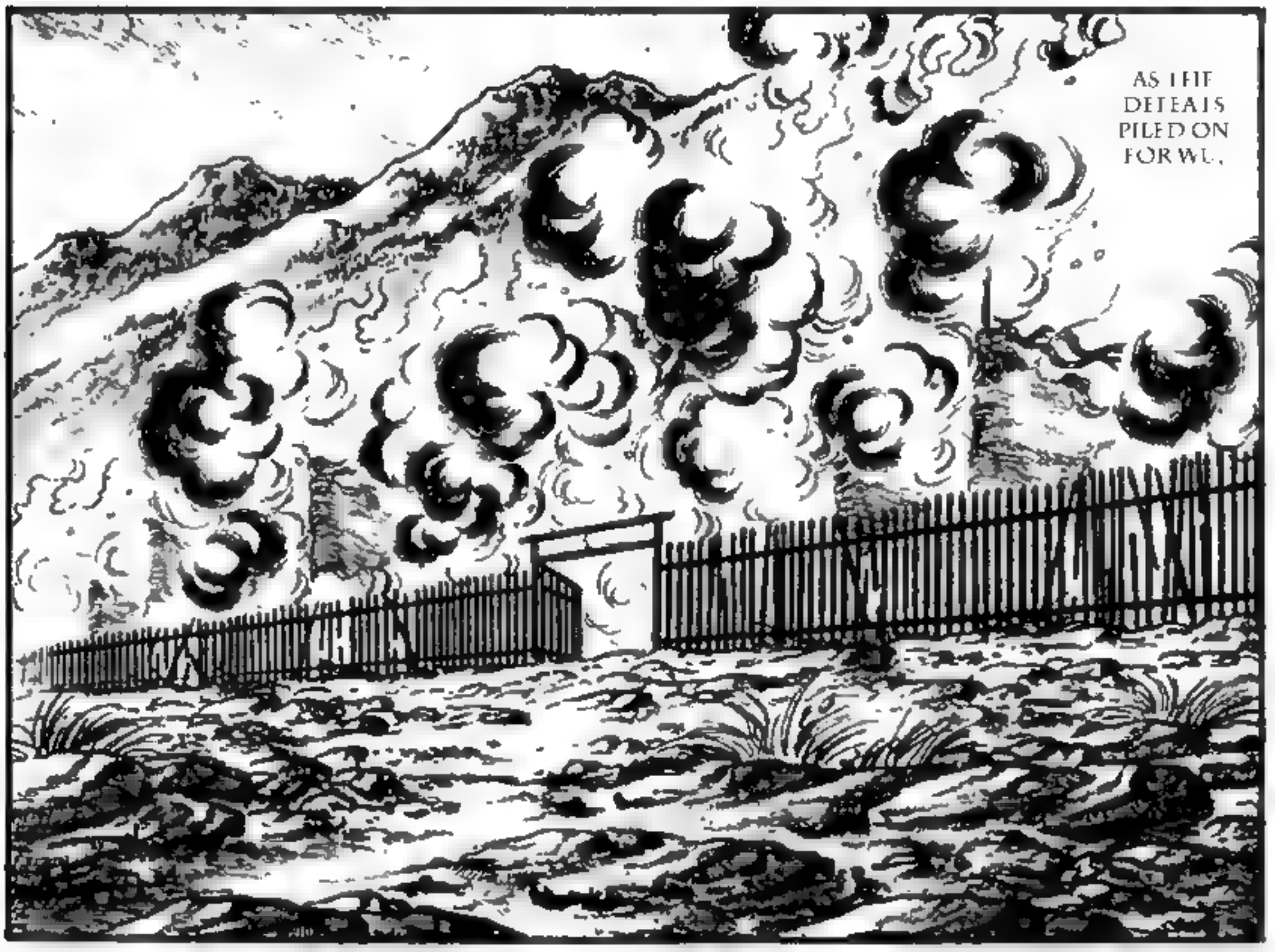
YES, OF COURSE.

WELL DONE. BUT KEEP IN MIND THERE ARE STILL MANY OTHERS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DEATH OF YOUR FATHER, SUCH AS FU SHIREN AND MI FANG, WHO TURNED OVER THE LANDS OF JINGZHOU TO WU.

IT SEEMS OUR YOUNGSTERS ARE LIVING UP TO THEIR LATE FATHERS. I HOPE OUR OLDER OFFICERS CAN LEND THEIR EXPERIENCE SO THAT OUR ARMIES, COMBINED WITH YOUTHFUL VIGOUR AND GRAY-HAIRED WISDOM, CAN SUCCESSFULLY CONQUER WU.

WITH MORALE RISING EVER HIGHER, THE SHU ARMY CONTINUED ITS ADVANCE DEEPER INTO WU LANDS.

AFTERLIFE APPEASEMENT



THESE TURN OF EVENTS WERE MOST TROUBLING FOR FU SHIREN AND MI TANG, WHO FOUND THEMSELVES AS TARGETS OF SHU'S WRATH

?

WHISPER WHISPER

WHY THE HELL ARE WE FIGHTING IN THE FIRST PLACE? WE'RE ALL JINGZHOU NATIVES HERE.

AT THIS RATE, IT'S ONLY A MATTER OF TIME UNTIL ALL OF WU FALLS.

THEIR EMPEROR HIMSELF IS OUT TO PERSONALLY COMMAND THE SHU TROOPS. IT'S NO WONDER THEIR DETERMINATION IS ON A WHOLE OTHER LEVEL FROM OURS.

THIS MESS ALL STARTED BECAUSE OUR CURRENT OFFICERS FU SHIREN AND MI FANG ORIGINALLY TURNED OVER JINGZHOU TO WU.

LU MENG TRICKED US INTO SWITCHING SIDES AFTER HE CAPTURED OUR HOMELANDS BUT LET'S NOT FORGET WE ALL ORIGINALLY SERVED GUAN YU.

GOOD IDEA, BUT WE CAN'T RUSH IT. WE SHOULD WAIT FOR AN OPPORTUNE MOMENT TO STRIKE.

HEY, WHY DON'T WE THEN KILL THOSE TWO AND TAKE THEIR HEADS TO THE SHU CAMP? WE'LL BE REWARDED HANDSOMELY FOR SURE.

WHAT'S WRONG, YOU SEEM PALE, MI FANG.

FU SHIREN!

I LITERALLY OVERHEARD THEM SAYING THAT JUST NOW!

WHAT!? ARE YOU SURE!?

HOW COULD I NOT WHEN THE SOLDIERS ARE PLANNING TO CUT OUR HEADS OFF AND BRING THEM TO THE SHU CAMPS!?

W-WHAT DO WE DO...!?

...

AS THE OLD SAYING GOES, "THE SPEAR FROM BEHIND IS DEADLIER THAN AN ARROW FROM FRONT."

WHAT? BUT WOULD LIU BEI FORGIVE US?

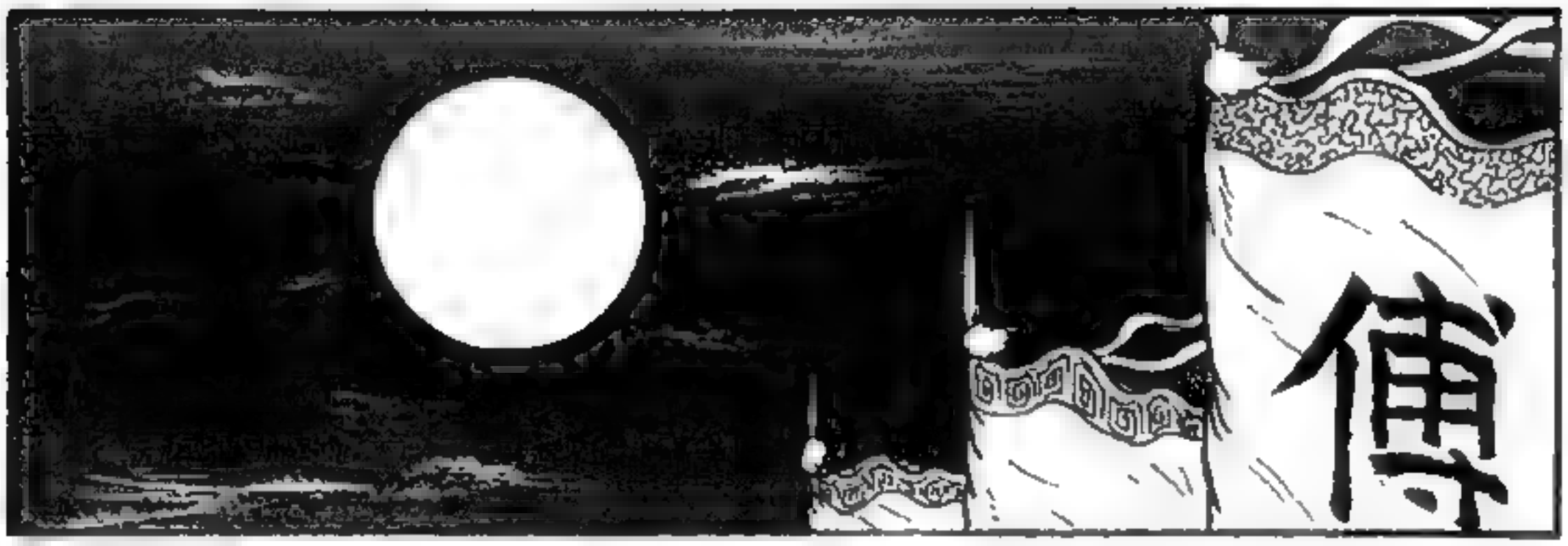
MAYBE WE SHOULD SURRENDER TO SHU FIRST?

HMM...

WELL THAT'S WHY WE HAVE TO BRING SOME SORT OF GIFT, LIKE THE HEAD OF OUR GENERAL HERE, MA ZHONG. WE CAN USE THAT TO APPEAL TO LIU BEI'S BENEVOLENCE.

F-FINE, LET'S DO AS YOU SAY TONIGHT.

LOOK, WE'RE EITHER GOING TO BE KILLED BY THE ENEMIES OR OUR OWN TROOPS IF WE DO NOTHING.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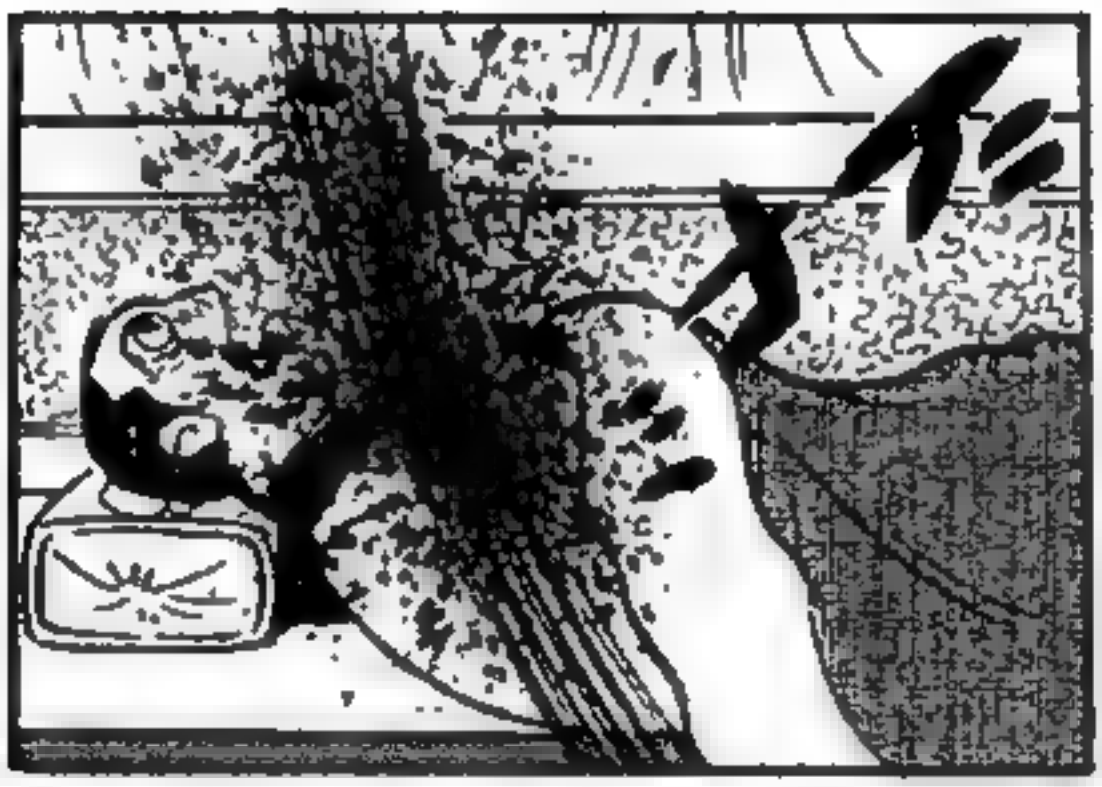
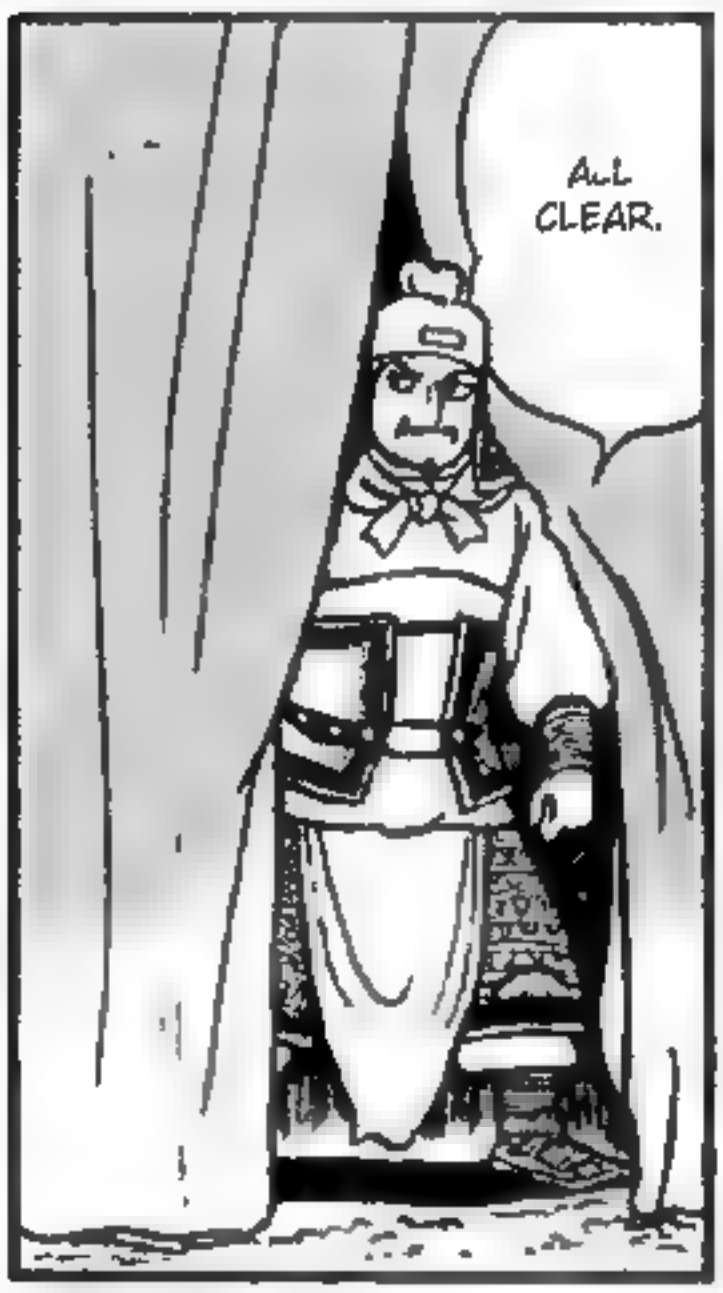
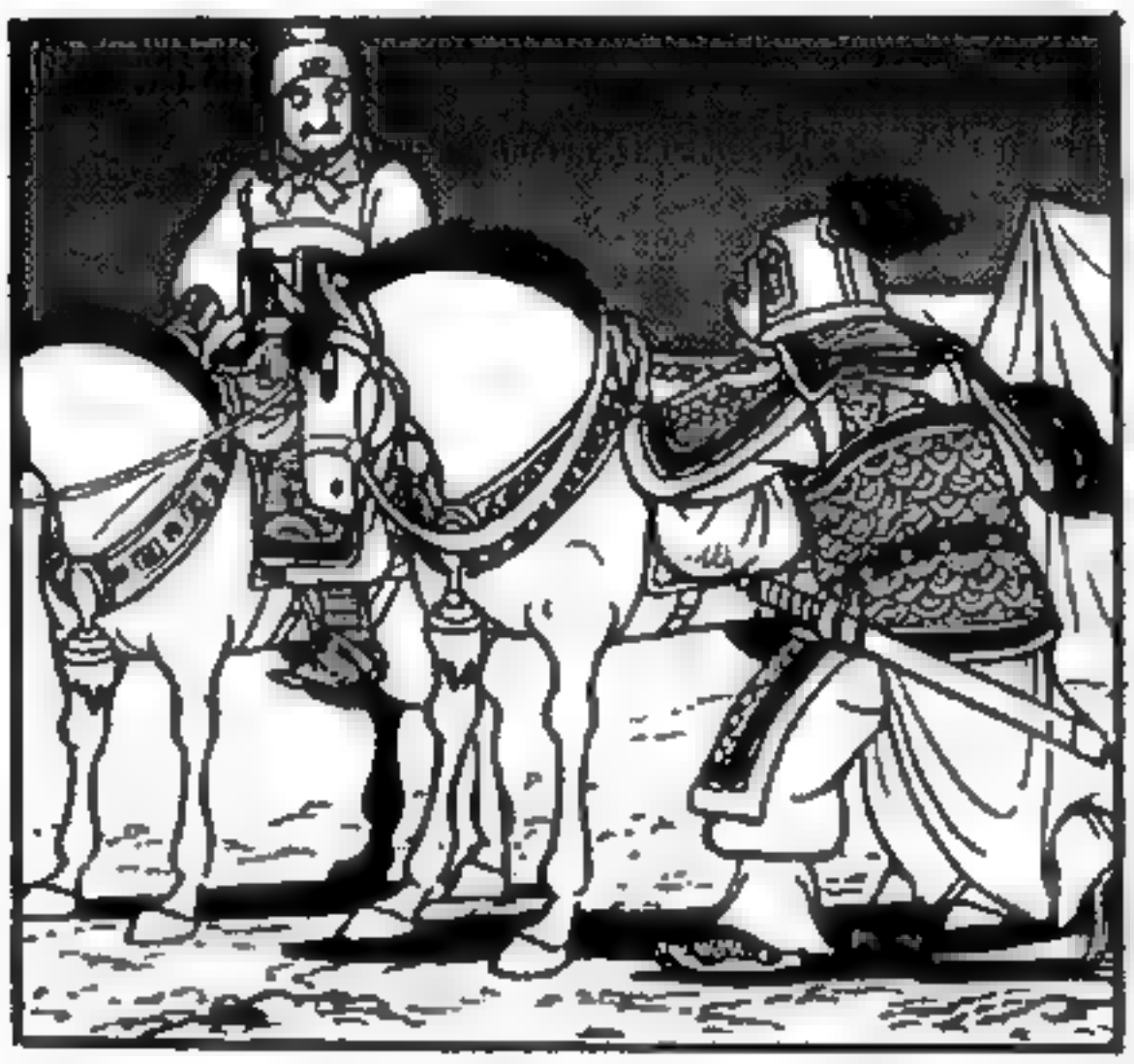
YES.

LET'S DO THIS.




ALL CLEAR.

RIGHT.
QUICKLY.



OPEN THE GATES. WE WILL BE GOING OUT TO PERSONALLY SCOUT THE NEARBY AREAS.

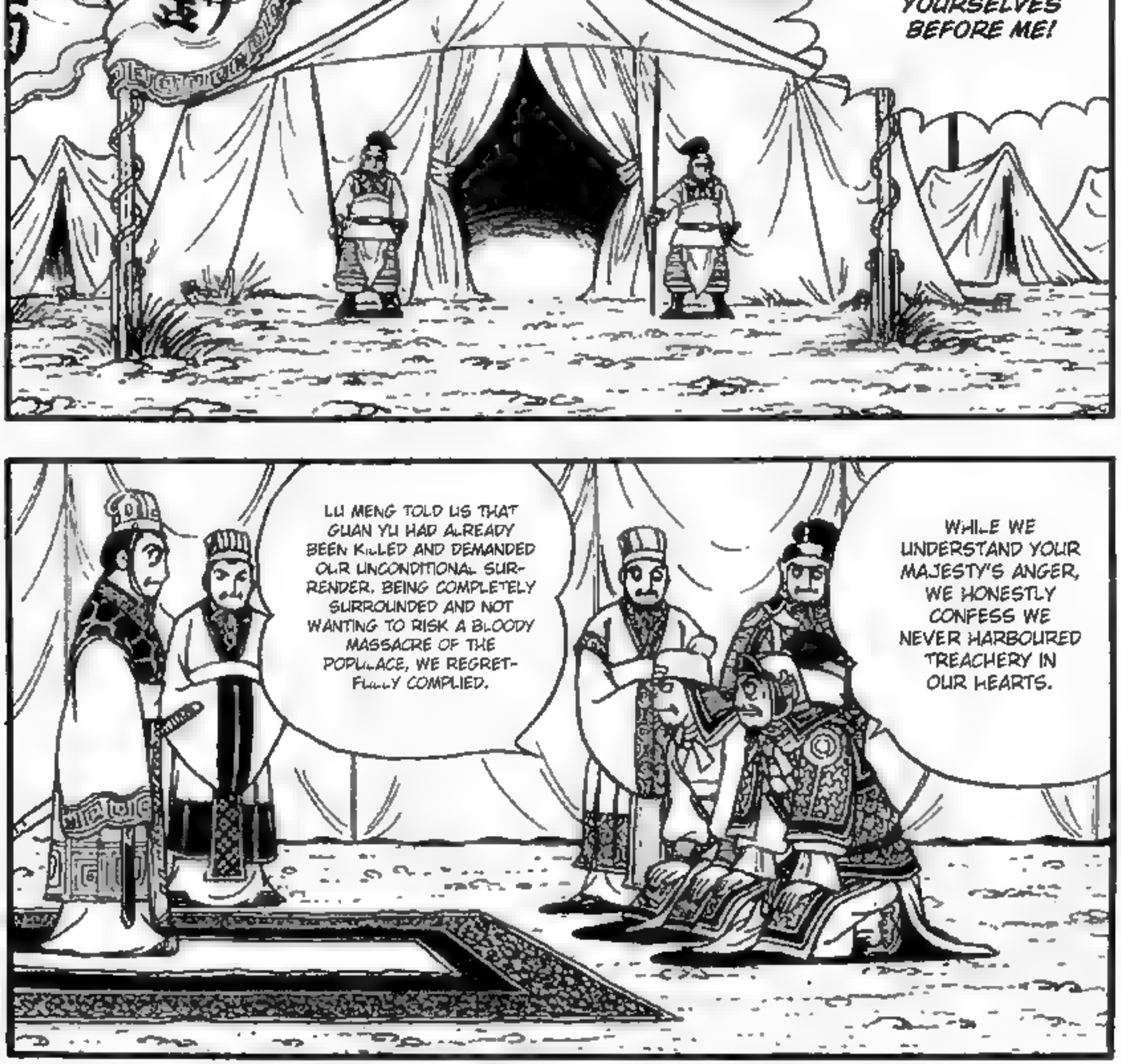
GOOD EVENING, SIRS.

YES, SIR.

NO TURNING BACK NOW.

GOOD, WE GOT PAST THE GUARDS.

HOW DARE YOU SHAMELESSLY SHOW YOURSELVES BEFORE ME!


LU MENG TOLD US THAT GUAN YU HAD ALREADY BEEN KILLED AND DEMANDED OUR UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER. BEING COMPLETELY SURROUNDED AND NOT WANTING TO RISK A BLOODY MASSACRE OF THE POPULACE, WE REGRETFULLY COMPLIED.
WHILE WE UNDERSTAND YOUR MAJESTY'S ANGER, WE HONESTLY CONFESS WE NEVER HARBOURED TREACHERY IN OUR HEARTS.

YOU BETRAYED GUAN YU WHEN YOU FOUND IT ADVANTAGEOUS TO DO SO, JUST AS YOU BETRAYED AND MURDERED YOUR NEW WU GENERAL! YOUR VILE TREACHERY IS BENEATH EVEN THAT OF WILD BEASTS!

SILENCE! DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA HOW MANY MONTHS HAVE PASSED SINCE I BEGAN MY CAMPAIGN AGAINST WU!? IF YOUR MOTIVES ARE AS YOU SAY, IT IS ABSURD THAT YOU DID NOT ACT UNTIL NOW, WHEN MY ARMIES ARE POISED TO OVERRUN ALL OF WU! DID YOU REALLY THINK THAT I WOULD FALL FOR YOUR HONEY-COATED WORDS!?

BUT AFTER HEARING YOU WERE NOW MARCHING ON THE SOUTHLANDS, WE HAVE QUICKLY COME TO SERVE OUR RIGHTFUL MASTER. WE HAVE EVEN BROUGHT THE HEAD OF THE ENEMY GENERAL MA ZHONG TO AID YOUR EFFORTS.

I WILL NEVER FORGIVE YOU TWO, OR GUAN YU WILL NEVER FORGIVE ME!

GLADLY.

GUAN XING! BEHEAD THESE TWO TO SACRIFICE THEM TO YOUR FATHER'S ALTAR!

I BEG YOUR FORGIVENESS!

AGHHH!

COME!

AHHH!

STOP WEEPING LIKE WOMEN! IF YOU HAD FOUGHT LIKE MEN TO BEGIN WITH AND DEFENDED YOUR CITIES, NEITHER YOU NOR MY FATHER WOULD HAVE HAD TO DIE!

STRUGGLING NOW WON'T SAVE YOUR SKINS SO AT LEAST DIE LIKE MEN, AS MY FATHER DID WHEN CAPTURED BY LU MENG.

FARE-WELL!

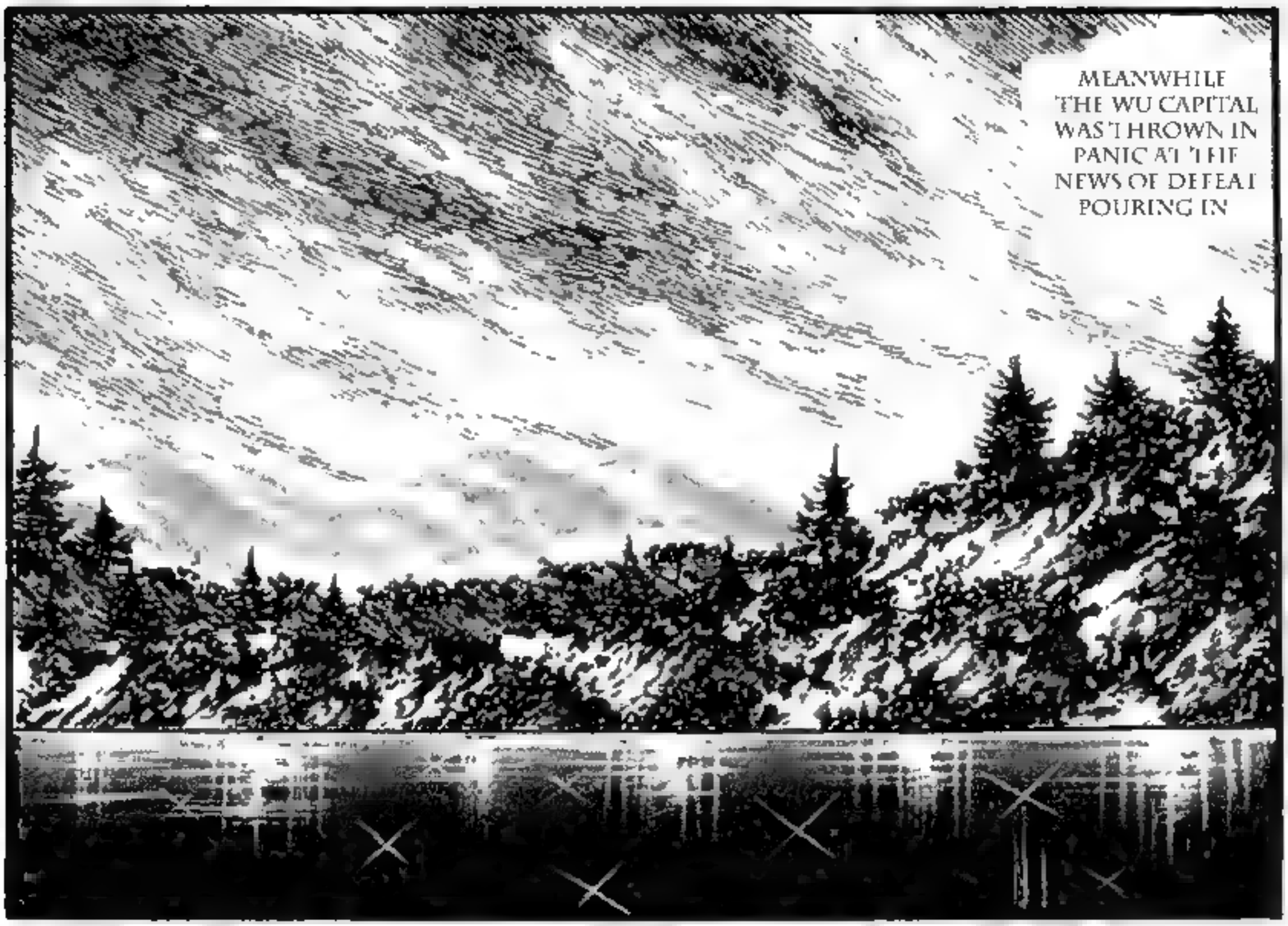
YES.
I WILL GO PRESENT THEIR HEADS BEFORE MY FATHER'S ALTAR, YOUR MAJESTY.

I FEEL TERRIBLY FRUSTRATED THAT WHILE GUAN XING HAS BEEN DUTIFULLY AVENGING HIS FATHER'S DEATH, I HAVE YET TO CATCH MY FATHER'S MURDERERS.

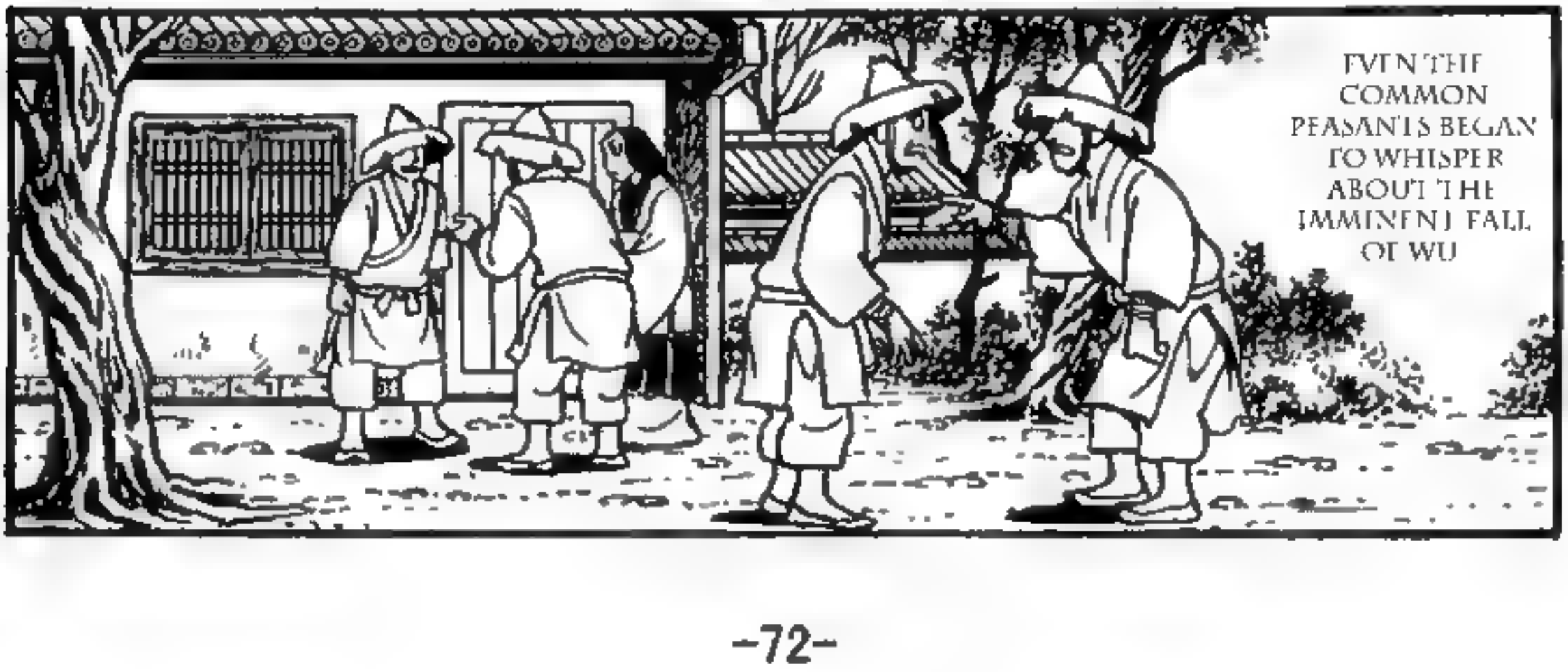
WHAT'S THE MATTER, ZHANG BAO?

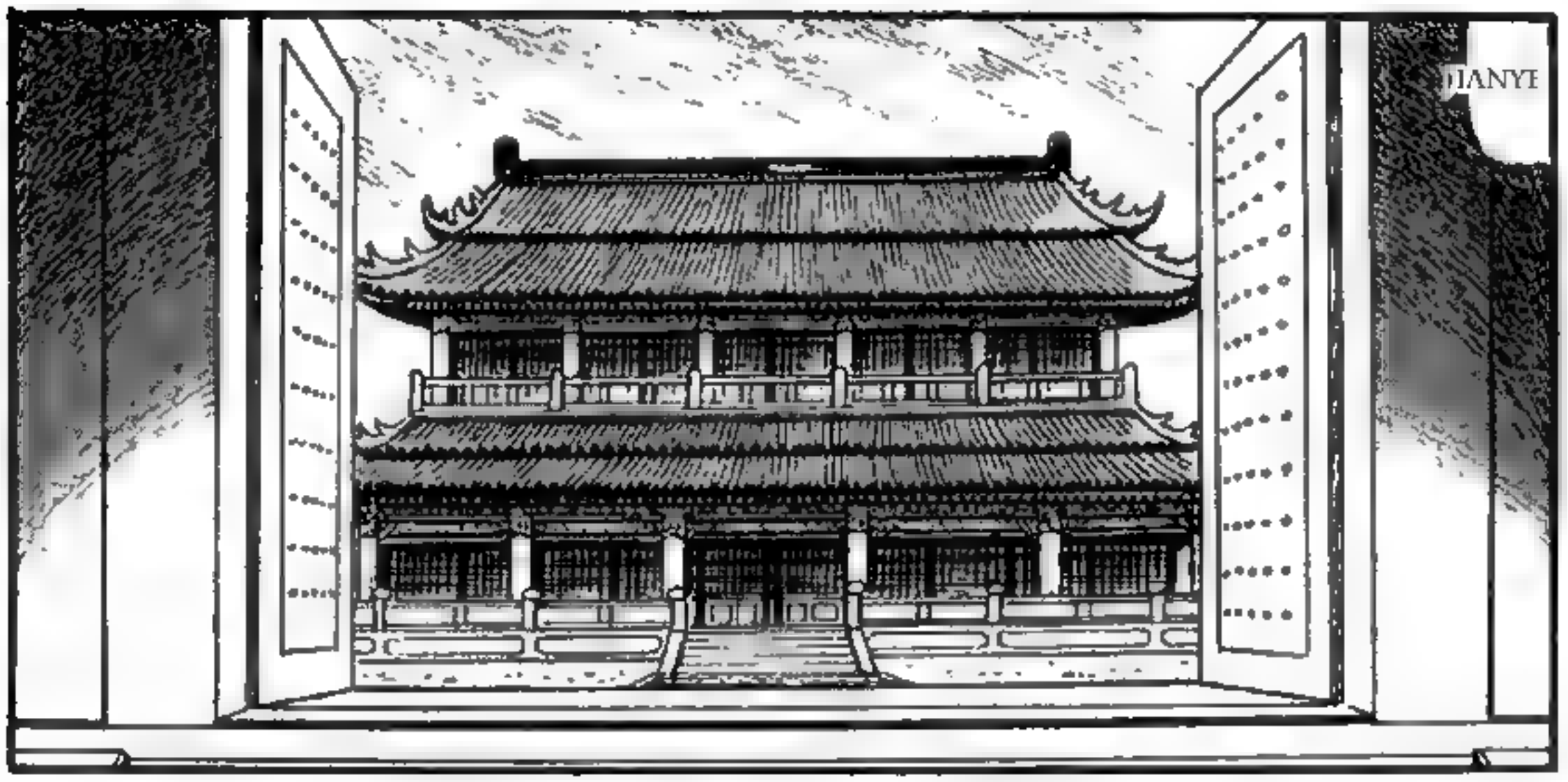
YES, YOUR MAJESTY.

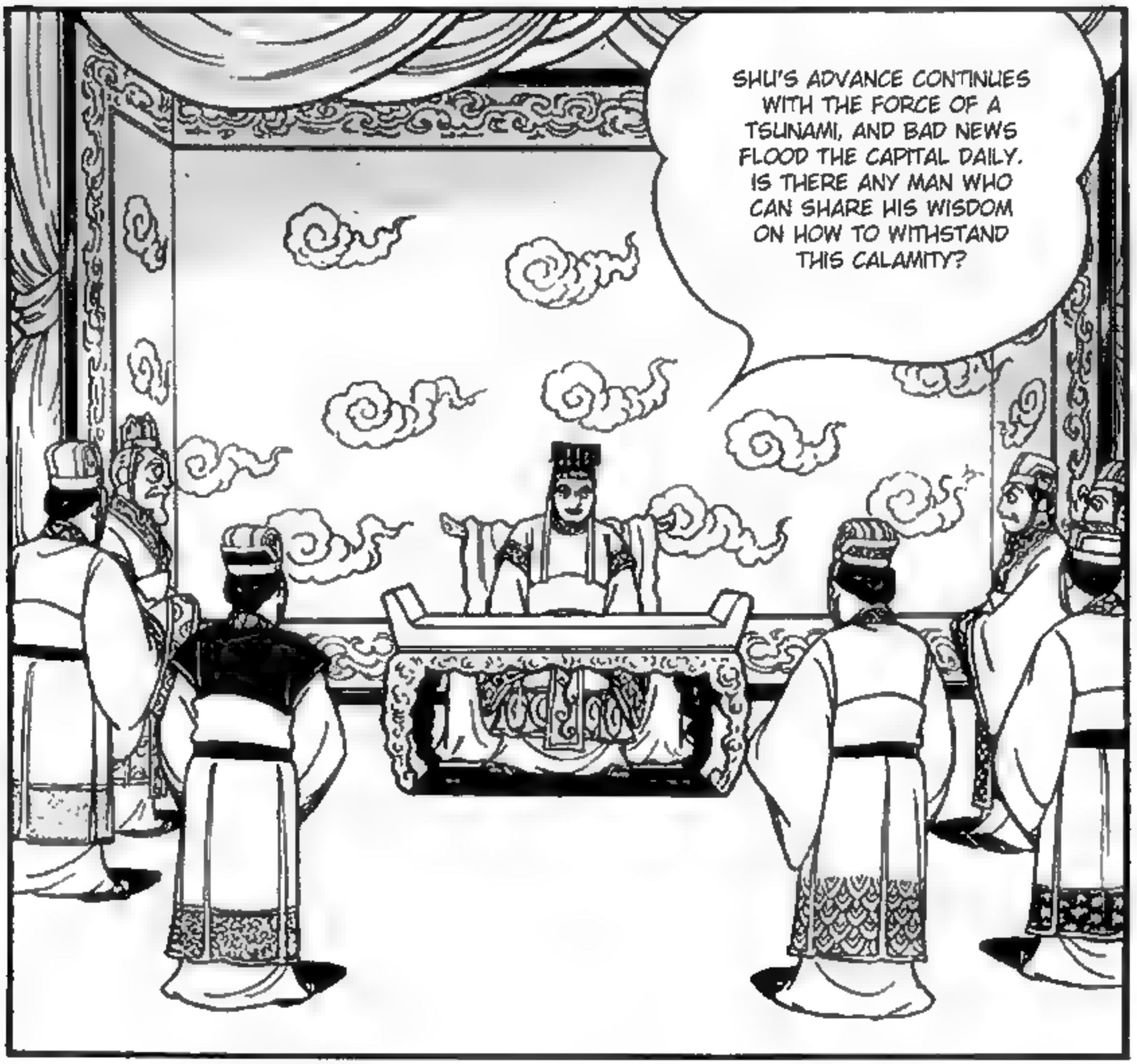
BE PATIENT A LITTLE LONGER, ZHANG BAO. IT WILL NOT BE LONG BEFORE WE MARCH ON JIANYE AND APPREHEND ALL THOSE RESPONSBLE FOR THE DEATHS OF BOTH ZHANG FEI AND GUAN YU.


MEANWHILE THE WU CAPITAL WAS THROWN IN PANIC AT THE NEWS OF DEFEAT POURING IN

THE LATEST NEWS WAS THE SHOCKING DEATH OF MA ZHONG AT THE HANDS OF FU SHIREN AND MI TANG


EVEN THE COMMON PEASANTS BEGAN TO WHISPER ABOUT THE IMMINENT FALL OF WU


JIANYI


SHU'S ADVANCE CONTINUES WITH THE FORCE OF A TSUNAMI, AND BAD NEWS FLOOD THE CAPITAL DAILY. IS THERE ANY MAN WHO CAN SHARE HIS WISDOM ON HOW TO WITHSTAND THIS CALAMITY?

ON TOP OF THAT, LET US RETURN LADY SUN AND JINGZHOU TO LIU BEI SO THAT WE MAY CONCLUDE A PEACE TREATY AND RENEW OUR ANTI-WEI ALLIANCE.

HOWEVER, ZHANG FEI'S KILLERS FAN JIANG AND ZHANG DA ARE STILL ALIVE. THUS, I PROPOSE WE SEND THOSE TWO TRAITORS BACK ALONG WITH THE HEAD OF ZHANG FEI.

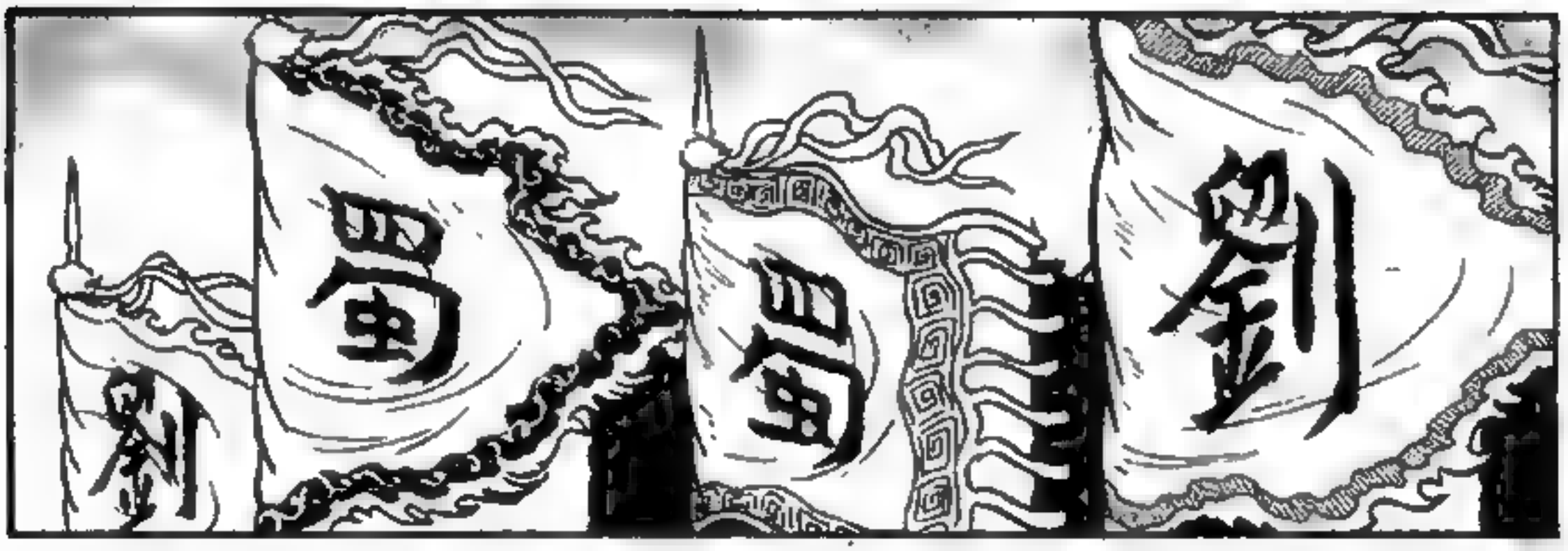
LIU BEI ORIGINALLY BEGAN HIS CAMPAIGN TO AVENGE GUAN YU'S DEATH. AS OF NOW, THOSE DIRECTLY ACCOUNTABLE FOR GUAN YU'S DEATH HAVE ALL PERISHED.

VERY WELL, NOW IS THE TIME FOR SWIFT ACTION. CARRY OUT THE PLAN AT ONCE.

SO RETURN EVERYTHING TO THE WAY IT WAS BEFORE

YES, ACT QUICKLY.

THEN I SHALL SEE TO IT THAT FAN JIANG AND PANG DA ARE HANDED OVER TO THE SHU CAMPS.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YES, ALONG WITH THE PRISONERS FAN JIANG AND ZHANG DA.
WHAT!? A WU ENVOY HAS DELIVERED ZHANG FEI'S HEAD!?
HERE, YOUR MAJESTY.
W-WHERE IS THE HEAD!?

ZHANG FEI...

ZHANG FEI!

YES, PERMISSION GRANTED.

YOUR MAJESTY, PLEASE A...OW ME TO EXECUTE MY FATHER'S MURDERERS BY MY HANDS...

FATHER...

UH...

Z-ZHANG BAO!

FAN JIANG! ZHANG DA!

TAKE THOSE TWO OUT FROM THE CAGE!

THIS WAY!
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GAHH!
GET OUT!

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FAN JIANG AND ZHANG DA! MY LATE FATHER ONCE SWORE WITH HIS MAJESTY TO RESTORE THE HAN DYNASTY, AND THAT THOUGH THEY WERE BORN ON DIFFERENT DAYS TO DIFFERENT MOTHERS, THEY WOULD AT LEAST LIVE AND DIE TOGETHER!

AS HIS SON, I WILL SLAY YOU HERE AND NOW TO APPEASE MY FATHER'S SPIRIT IN THE AFTERLIFE!

IT WAS THAT OATH THAT COMPELLED HIS MAJESTY AND MY FATHER TO ATTACK WU, AND HAD IT NOT BEEN FOR YOUR TREACHEROUS INTERFERENCE, THEY BOTH WOULD HAVE BEEN ABLE TO SUCCEED IN THEIR FRATERNAL DUTIES!

THAT WILL NOT DO, MA LIANG.

YOUR MAJESTY, THE ENVOY HAS STATED SUN QUAN'S WILLINGNESS TO RETURN BOTH LADY SUN AND JINGZHOU AND PARTICIPATE IN ANY FUTURE MILITARY CAMPAIGNS AGAINST WEI.

WE SHOULD TURN OUR ATTENTION NOW ON WEI INSTEAD.

BUT HAVE YOU NOT AVENGED YOUR BROTHERS BY EXECUTING ALL THEIR MURDERERS?

I WILL ATTACK WEI ONLY AFTER TAKING WU.

MA LIANG, THE OATH OF BROTHERHOOD I SWORE DOES NOT END WITH ME S.MPLY AVENGING MY BROTHERS' DEATHS. WE ORIGINALLY SWORE FOR THE RESTORATION OF THE IMPERIAL DYNASTY.

VERY WELL, YOUR MAJESTY.

ALTHOUGH I AM NOW THE ONLY SURVIVING BROTHER, I ALONE WILL ENDEAVOUR TO MAKE OUR GOAL COME TRUE. THIS ENTAILS BRINGING BOTH WU AND WEI TO SUBMISSION. A PEACE WITH WU IS CONTRARY TO MY STATED GOALS.

COMPARED TO BEFORE, HIS MAJESTY IS A LITTLE TOO HARD-HEADED FOR HIS OWN GOOD... THE RECENT STRING OF VICTORIES MAY HAVE HAD AN UNINTENDED ILL EFFECT UPON HIM. TO KNOW ONLY VICTORY WITHOUT LOSS MAKES ONE OVERZEALOUS. PRUDENT MODESTY MUST BE EXERCISED WITH ANY AMOUNT OF SUCCESS AT ALL TIMES.

THE YOUNG COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

JIANYE
YES, HE SAID HE WOULD NOT BUDGE FROM HIS GOAL OF UNITING THE REALM UNDER HIS IMPERIAL LINEAGE.
LIU BEI REJECTED ALL TERMS FOR PEACE!?

BUT WHAT CAN WE DO...

IF WE DO NOT COME UP WITH ANOTHER PLAN, THIS WILL BE THE FALL OF WU.

I CAN'T BELIEVE HOW CUT-THROAT HE'S BECOME!

ENOUGH PANICKING!

YOU DO REALIZE THE FULL GRAVITY OF OUR CURRENT CRISIS, DO YOU NOT?

BOLD WORDS, KAN ZE, BUT DO YOU HAVE AN ACTUAL PLAN TO PROPOSE?

YES, AND THAT IS PRECISELY WHY I AM VEXED THAT NOBODY HAS YET RECOMMENDED THE MAN WITH TALENT SO LARGE HE CAN SERVE AS THE NEW PILLAR FOR OUR STATE!

YES, YOUR HIGHNESS.

WE HAVE SUCH A TALENTED MAN, KAN ZE?

HE IS NONE OTHER THAN LU XUN BOYAN, WHO IS IN JINGZHOU AT THE MOMENT.

WELL OUT WITH IT THEN! I WOULD PERSONALLY GO PICK UP HIS SHOES IF I KNEW WHO THIS GREAT TALENT WAS.

HAS THE CURRENT PREDICAMENT DRIVEN YOU MAD, KAN ZE?

THAT OBSCURE SCHOLAR?

LU XUN!?

LU XUN IS BUT A PEDANTIC SCHOLAR. HE IS NO GREAT WARRIOR NOR MASTER STRATEGIST!

ZHOU YU, LU SU, AND LU MENG HAVE SUCCESSIVELY SERVED AS THE PILLARS OF OUR STATE. THEIR TALENT WAS RECOGNIZED AND RESPECTED BY ALL. YOU SERIOUSLY COMPARE LU XUN TO THESE THREE GIANTS?

EXACTLY! HE WILL ONLY CREATE PROBLEMS WITH THE CHAIN OF COMMAND!

EVEN IF HE WERE GIVEN AUTHORITY TO COMMAND OUR ARMIES, I DOUBT ANY OF THE OFFICERS WOULD OBEDIENTLY OBEY SUCH A YOUNG AND OBSCURE FIGURE.

YOUR HIGHNESS, IF MY CLAIMS TURN OUT TO BE FALSE, I GLADLY OFFER MY HEAD TO THE CHOPPING BLOCK.

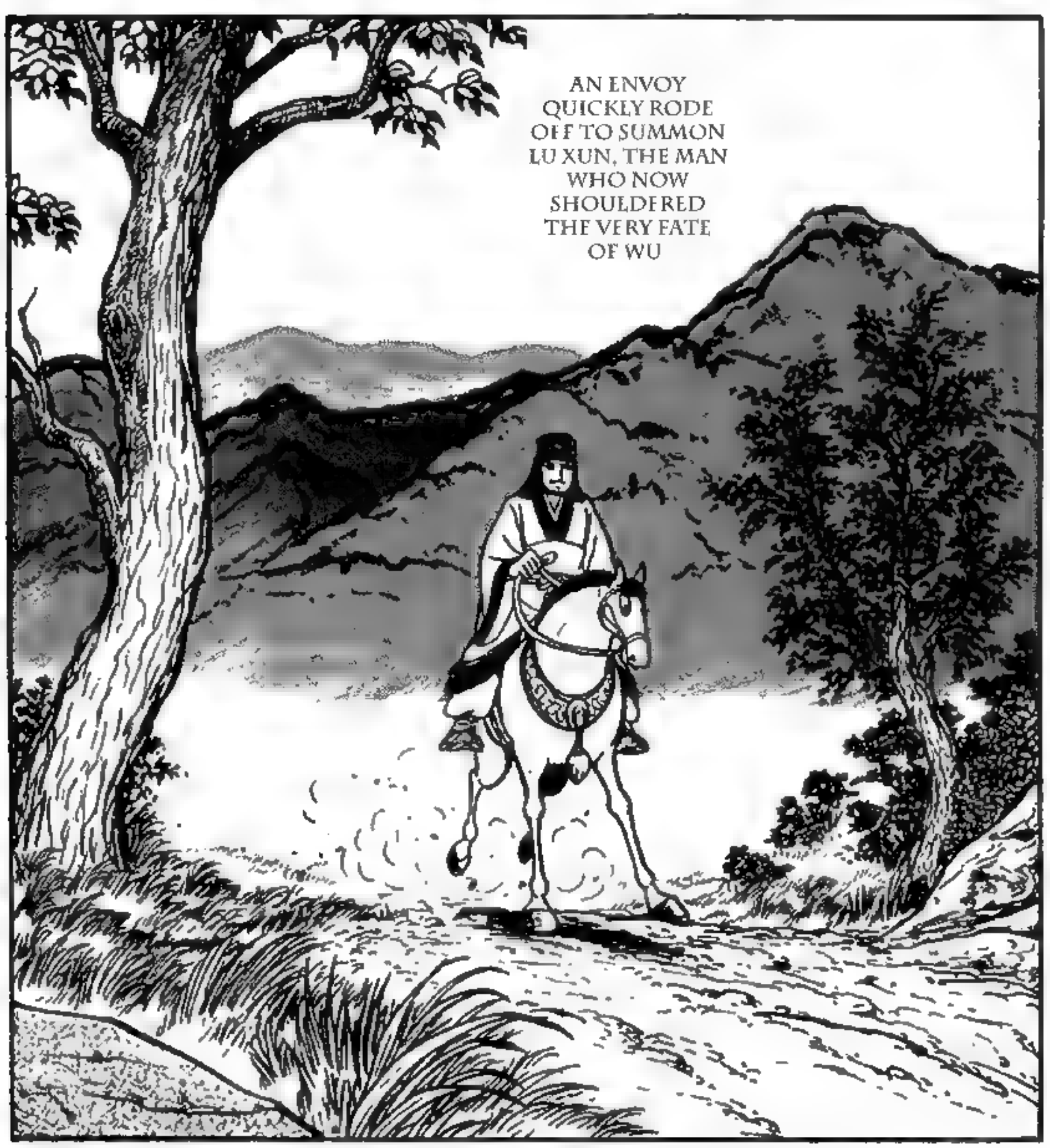
HMM... NOW THAT I THINK OF IT, LU MENG DID ENTHUSIASTIC-ALLY SPEAK OF LU XUN.

FAME AND STATUS IS ALL LU XUN LACKS. HE IS MORE THAN TALENTED ENOUGH TO REPLACE ME IN LUKOU.

SUMMON HIM TO THE CAPITAL AT ONCE!

LU MENG HIMSELF ONCE SAID LU XUN WAS TALENTED ENOUGH TO REPLACE HIM. HE MAY BE YOUNG, BUT HIS TALENTS SHOULD NOT BE DISPARAGED.

SAY NO MORE, I HAVE MADE UP MY MIND.
THIS IS RECKLESS, YOUR HIGHNESS!
BUT...


AN ENVOY QUICKLY RODE OFF TO SUMMON LU XUN, THE MAN WHO NOW SHOULDERED THE VERY FATE OF WU

WHAT IS IT?
I AM HONOURED TO RECEIVE YOUR CALL IN THIS MOMENT OF CRISIS, BUT I HAVE ONE REQUEST TO MAKE.

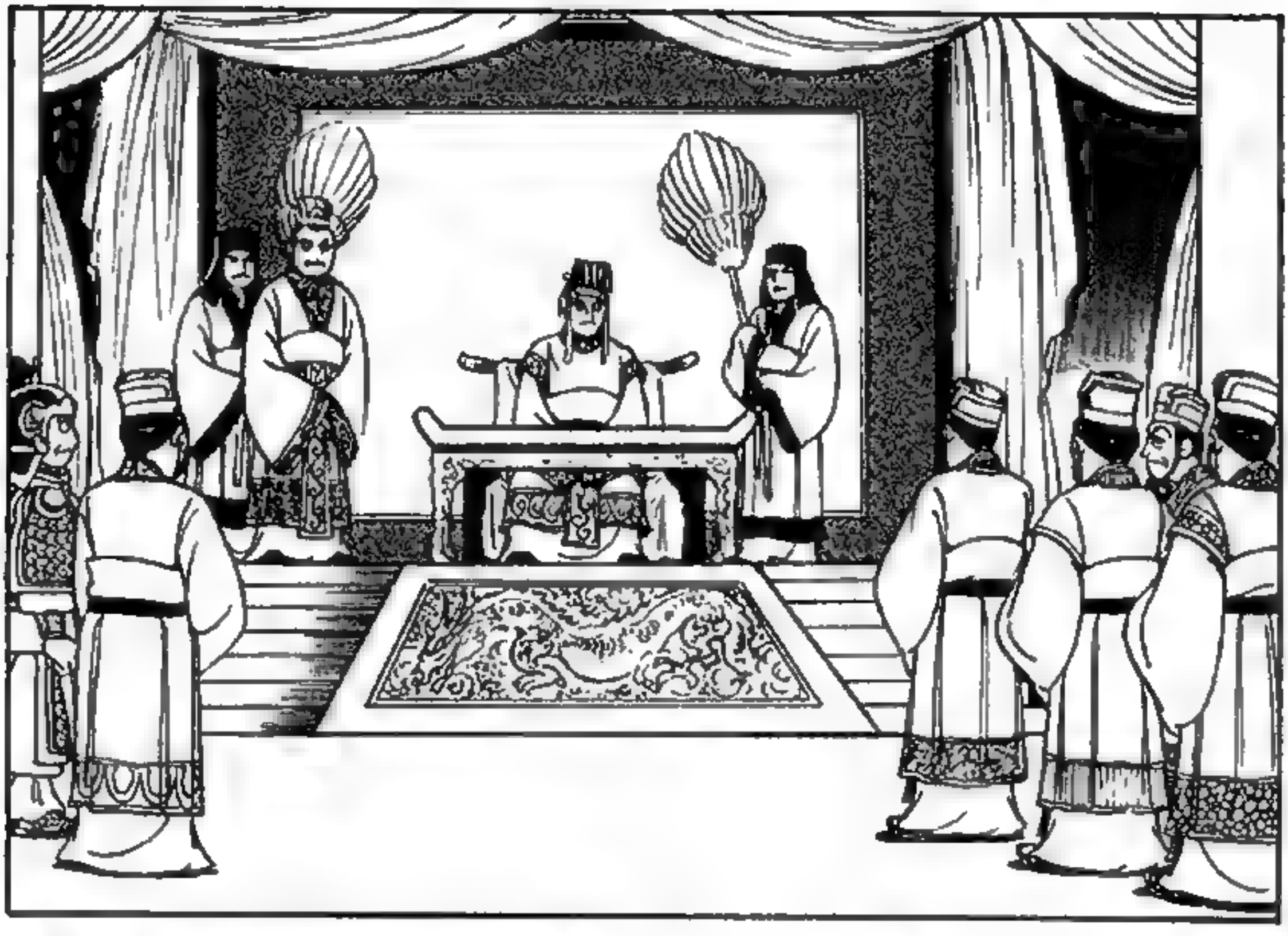
VERY WELL.

I HAVE NEITHER THE RANK NOR FAME NORMALLY ASSUMED FOR A COMMANDER. I THUS ASK YOUR HIGHNESS TO PRESENT ME WITH YOUR SWORD IN FRONT OF ALL THE MINISTERS AND OFFICERS.

YES, SIR.

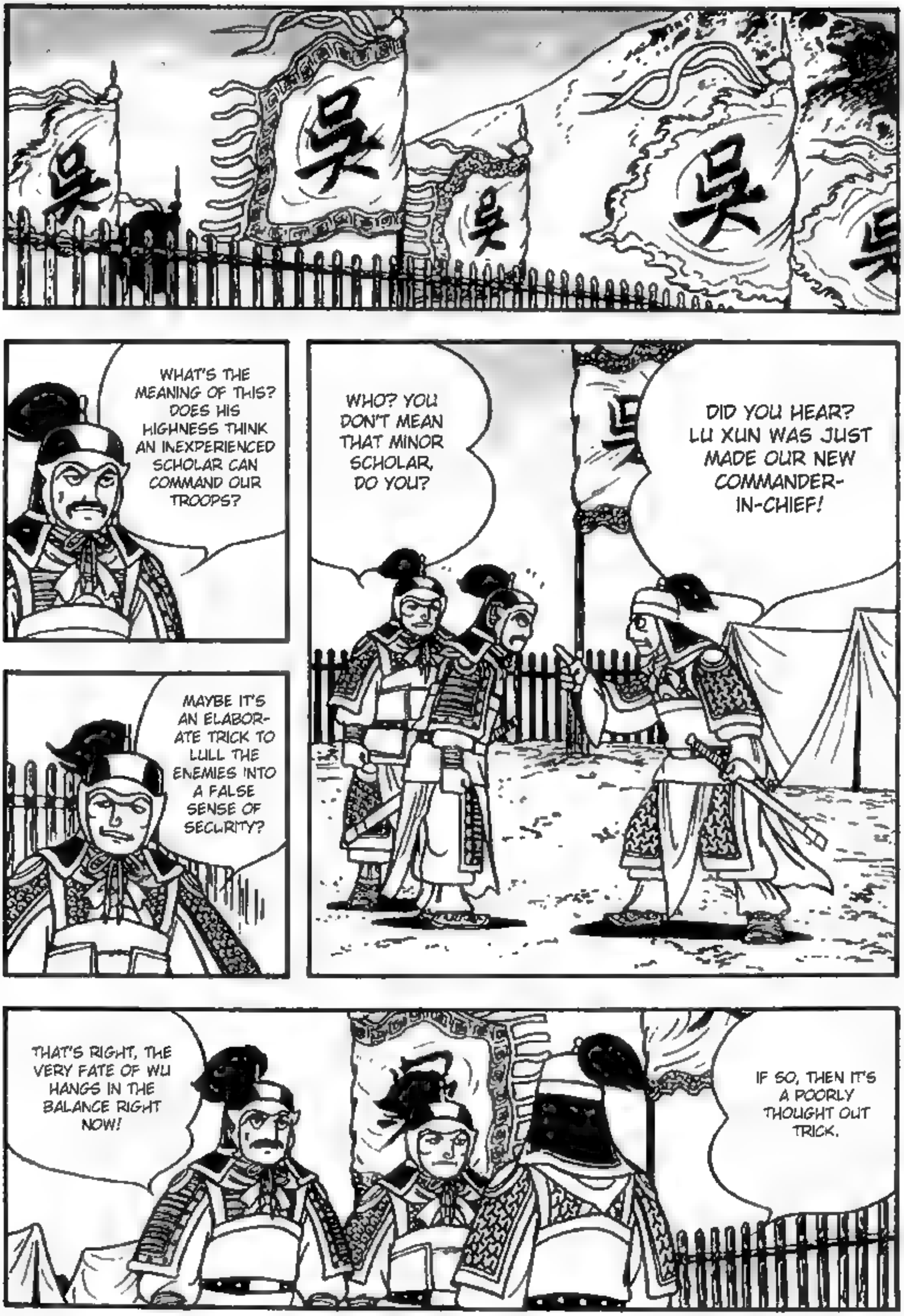
SUMMON ALL THE MINISTERS AND OFFICERS AT ONCE!

ALL THE IMPORTANT MINISTERS AND OFFICERS NOW GATHERED AT THE CAPITAL BEFORE SUN QUAN



I BESTOW UPON HIM MY SWORD TO SIGNIFY HIS ORDERS ARE MY OWN ORDERS!

I HEREBY APPOINT LU XUN AS THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF, GUARDIAN OF THE RIGHT AND GENERAL WHO QUELLS THE WEST. HE WILL HAVE FULL CONTROL OF THE 81 COUNTIES AND 5 COMMANDERIES OF JINGZHOU, AS WELL AS ITS ENTIRE ARMED FORCES.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WHAT'S THE MEANING OF THIS? DOES HIS HIGHNESS THINK AN INEXPERIENCED SCHOLAR CAN COMMAND OUR TROOPS?
WHO? YOU DON'T MEAN THAT MINOR SCHOLAR, DO YOU?
DID YOU HEAR? LU XUN WAS JUST MADE OUR NEW COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF!
MAYBE IT'S AN ELABORATE TRICK TO LULL THE ENEMIES INTO A FALSE SENSE OF SECURITY?
THAT'S RIGHT, THE VERY FATE OF WU HANGS IN THE BALANCE RIGHT NOW!
IF SO, THEN IT'S A POORLY THOUGHT OUT TRICK.

HERE COMES THE NEW COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF!

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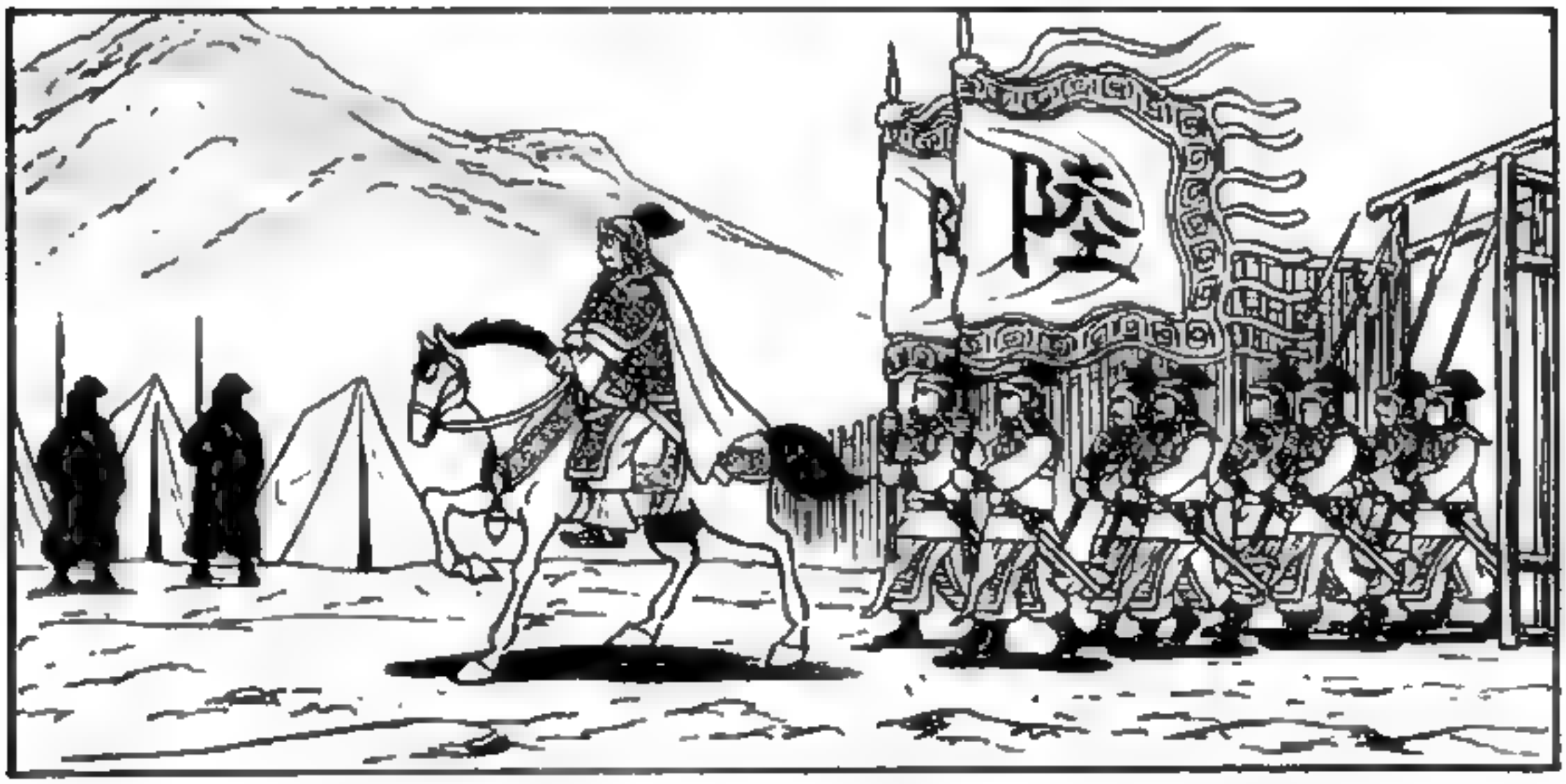
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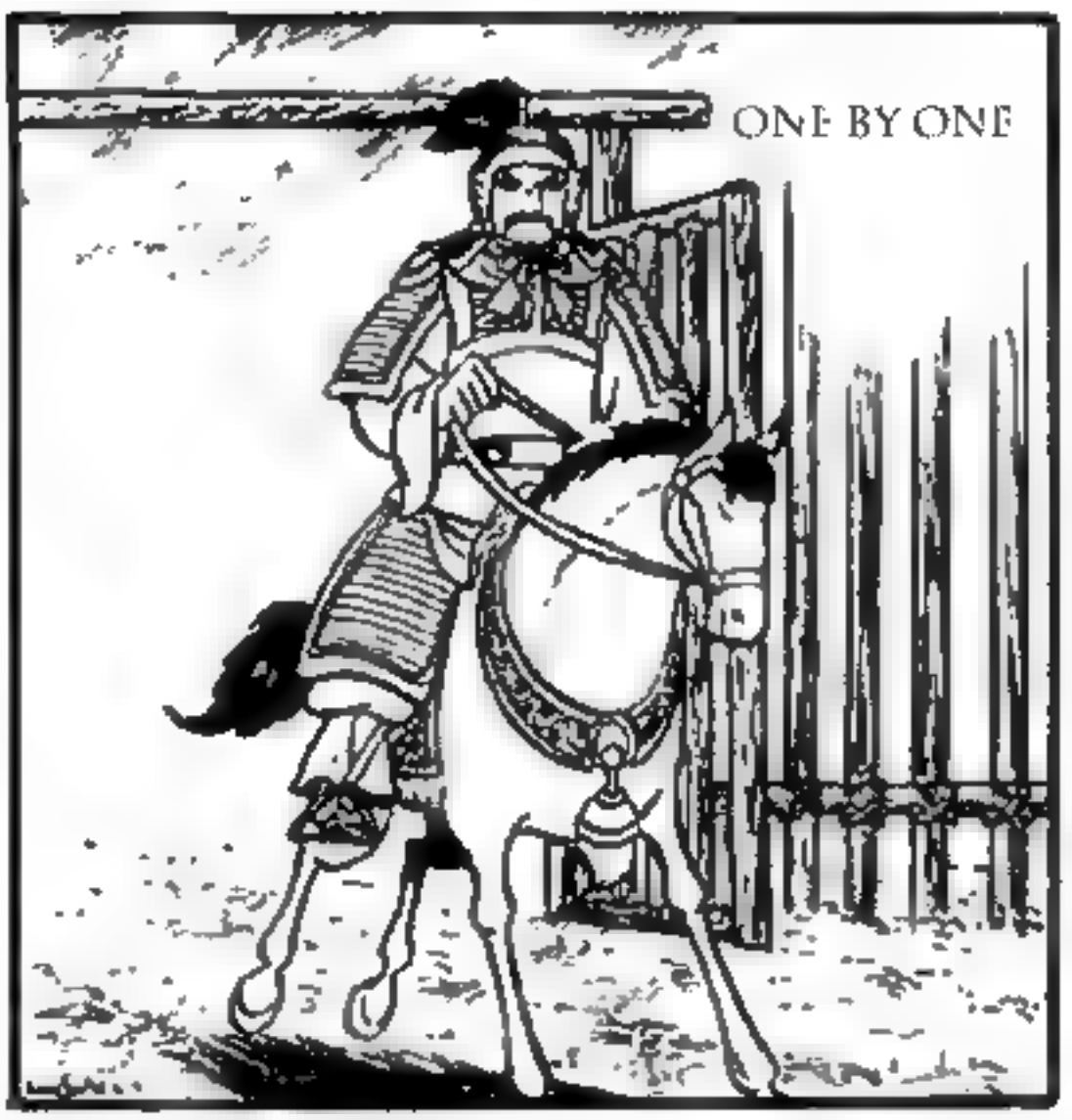
WU'S FALL IS IMMINENT...

YES, SIR!
ASSEMBLE ALL THE GENERALS!

GENERALS ASSEMBLED BEFORE LU XUN WITH A DISGRUNTLED FACE


ONE BY ONE

HEAR ME WELL! I HAVE BEEN APPOINTED COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF BY NONE OTHER THAN HIS HIGHNESS!

THIS SWORD BELONGS TO HIS HIGHNESS! HE HAS GIVEN IT TO ME TO SIGNIFY MY ORDERS ARE EQUIVALENT TO HIS OWN!

FOR AN ARMY TO FUNCTION COHESIVELY, THE CHAIN OF COMMAND IS OF UTMOST IMPORTANCE. I WILL NOT HESITATE TO EXECUTE ANY WHO DARES TO DISOBEY HIS ORDERS!

YOU MAY, ZHOU TAI.

MAY I ASK A QUESTION?

YILING IS NOT OF CHIEF CONCERN AT THE PRESENT. MOREOVER, SUN HUAN IS A COMPETENT MAN WITH THE TRUST OF HIS TROOPS. HE WILL BE ABLE TO ENDURE HIS CURRENT PREDICAMENT.

SUN HUAN, THE NEPHEW OF OUR HIGHNESS, IS CURRENTLY BESIEGED AT YILING WITH FOOD RUNNING LOW. DO YOU HAVE A PLAN TO RELIEVE OUR FORCES THERE AND RESCUE SUN HUAN?

MY GOAL IS TO DEFEAT THE INVASION BY CRUSHING THE CORE OF SHU'S ARMY. ONCE THAT'S DONE, THE SIEGE ON YI'LING WILL BE LIFTED AND ALL ENEMY DIVISIONS WILL BE FORCED TO RETREAT.

THEN MAY I ASK HOW YOU WILL COUNTER THE INVADING SHU FORCES?

YOU CALL THAT AN ACTUAL PLAN...?

HAHA...

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FOR THE TIME BEING, REDOUBLE YOUR DEFENSES! I EXPRESSLY FORBID ALL OFFENSIVE MANEUVERS! ANY WHO DISOBEYS WILL BE SUM-MARILY EXECUTED!

SILENCE! I WILL NOT ALLOW ANY DISSENT!

WE ARE WARRIORS, PREPARED TO DIE FIGHTING THE WRETCHED INVADERS! YET YOU SEEK TO FURTHER DAMPEN THE MEN'S MORALE BY ORDERING THEM TO IDLY SIT BY AND WAIT FOR DEATH TO COME!?

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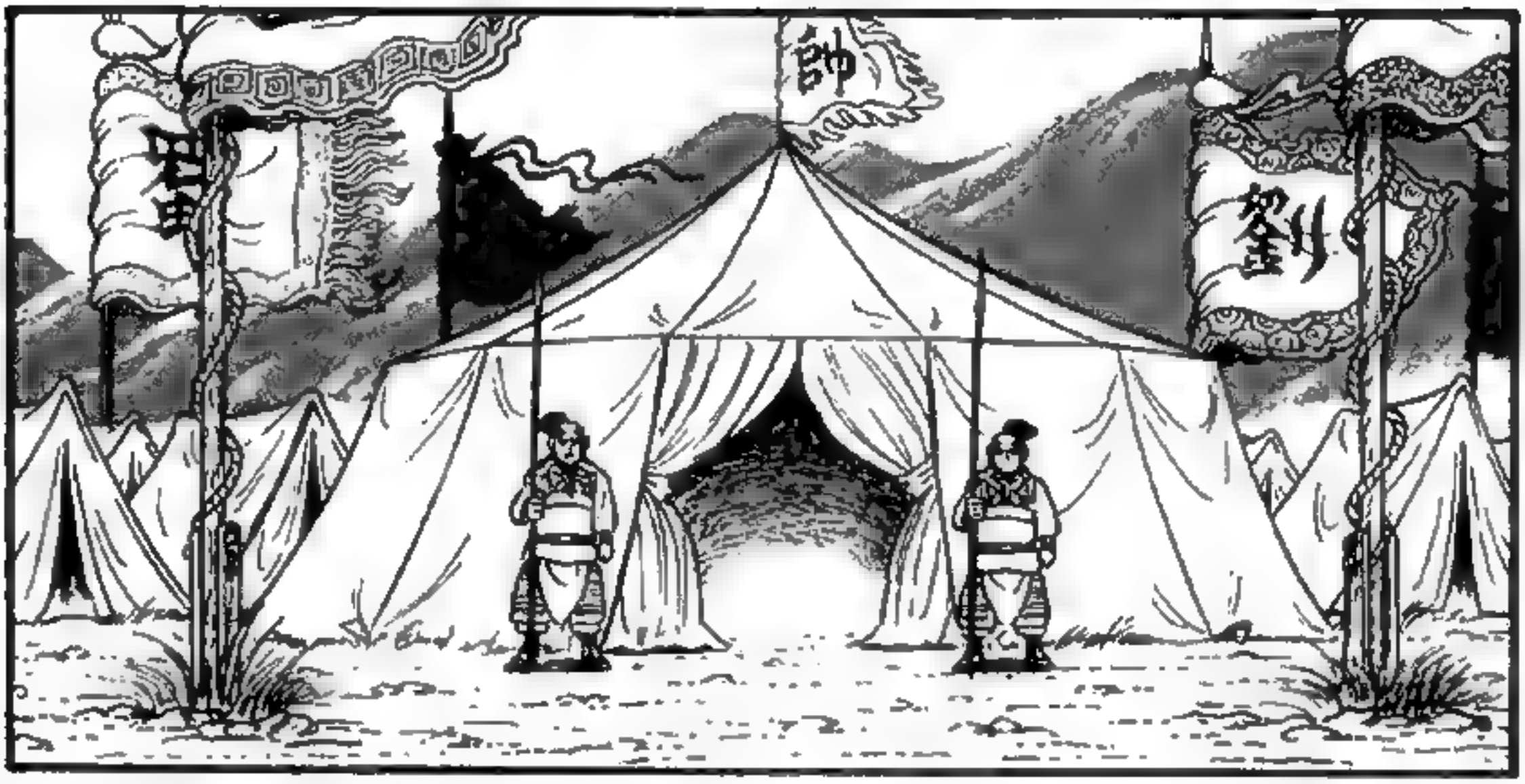
NOW RETURN TO YOUR POSTS AND SIMPLY AWAIT MY FURTHER ORDERS!

HIS NEWFOUND RANK AND POWER HAS ALL GONE TO THAT ARROGANT SCHOLAR'S HEAD!

DESPITE HIS LOFTY AIMS, HE HARDLY HAS AN ACTUAL CONCRETE PLAN! I FEAR WU'S DAYS ARE NOW NUMBERED...

I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS! SUN HUAN'S IN PERIL AND OUR COMMANDER'S PERFECTLY CONTENT TO SACRIFICE HIM!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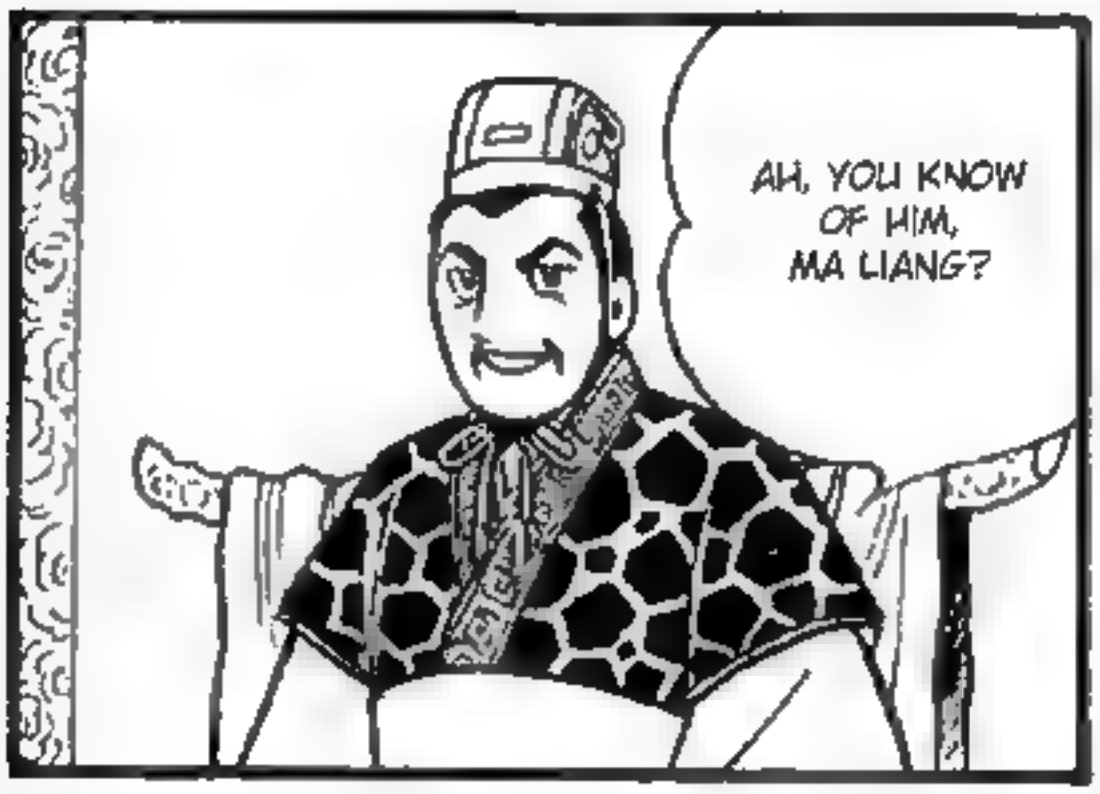
I HEAR LU XUN HAS RECENTLY BEEN MADE WU'S NEW COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF. I DO NOT BELIEVE I HAVE HEARD OF HIM BEFORE. DOES ANYONE HERE KNOW WHO THIS MAN IS?


AH, YOU KNOW OF HIM, MA LIANG?

I DO, YOUR MAJESTY. SUN QUAN HAS PICKED QUITE A FEARSOME INDIVIDUAL.

WHY HAS SUCH A TALENTED MAN BEEN KEPT IN THE SHADOWS FOR SO LONG THEN?

HE HAS BEEN A LOWLY SCHOLAR OF JIANGDONG FOR MOST OF HIS LIFE, BUT HIS TALENTS WERE HIGHLY RESPECTED BY LU MENG, WHO CLAIMED LU XUN'S WISDOM AND CUNNING KNEW NO LIMITS.

ASIDE FROM LU MENG, HIS WORTH WAS UNDERESTIMATED BY MANY INFLUENTIAL MINISTERS AND OFFICERS.

WHAT!

STILL, I HAVE HEARD THAT LU XUN, NOT LU MENG, WAS THE ONE WHO CAME UP WITH THE STRATEGY TO SNATCH ALL OF JINGZHOU FROM UNDER GUAN YU'S EYES.

THEN WHY HAVE YOU NOT SAID SO UNTIL NOW! IF I'D KNOWN THE MAN WHO CAUSED MY BROTHER'S DEATH WAS STILL ROAMING, I WOULD HAVE RUSHED TO ACTION!

THEN IT WAS BY HIS HANDS THAT GUAN YU FELL, NOT LU MENG!

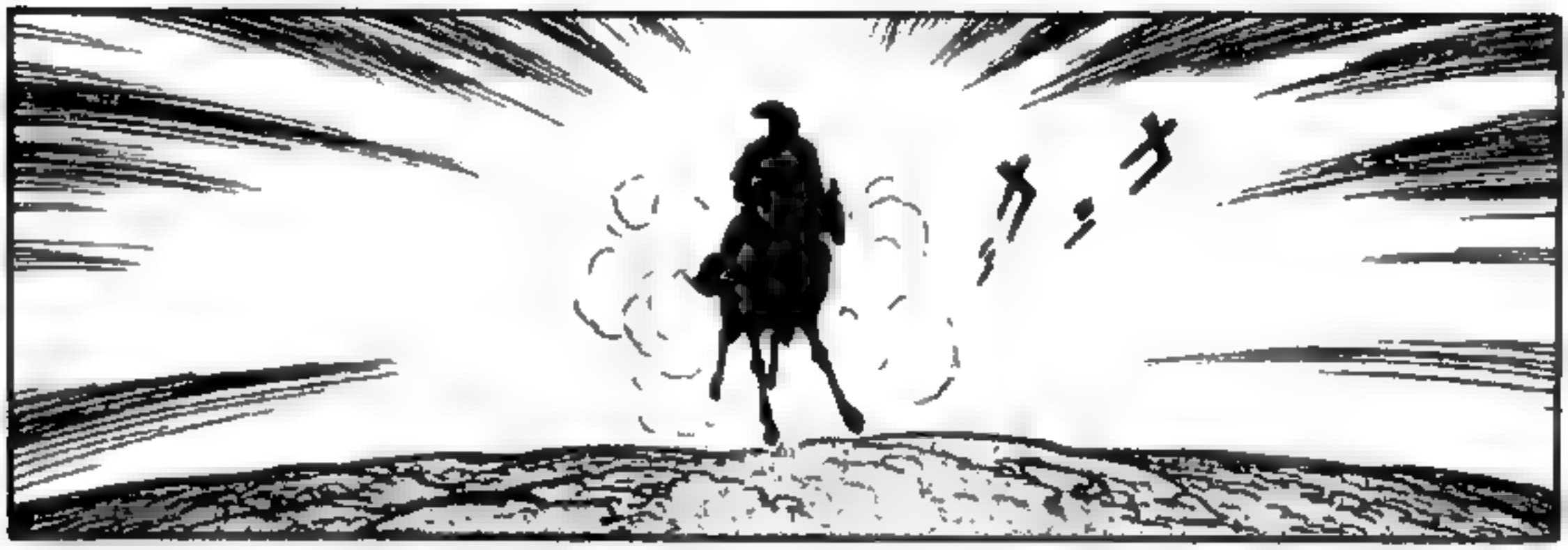
YES, ONE CAN SEE IT THAT WAY.

SILENCE! I HAVE SPENT DECADES ON THE BATTLEFIELD MYSELF AND AM NOT ABOUT TO BE BESTED BY A YOUNG MILKSOP!

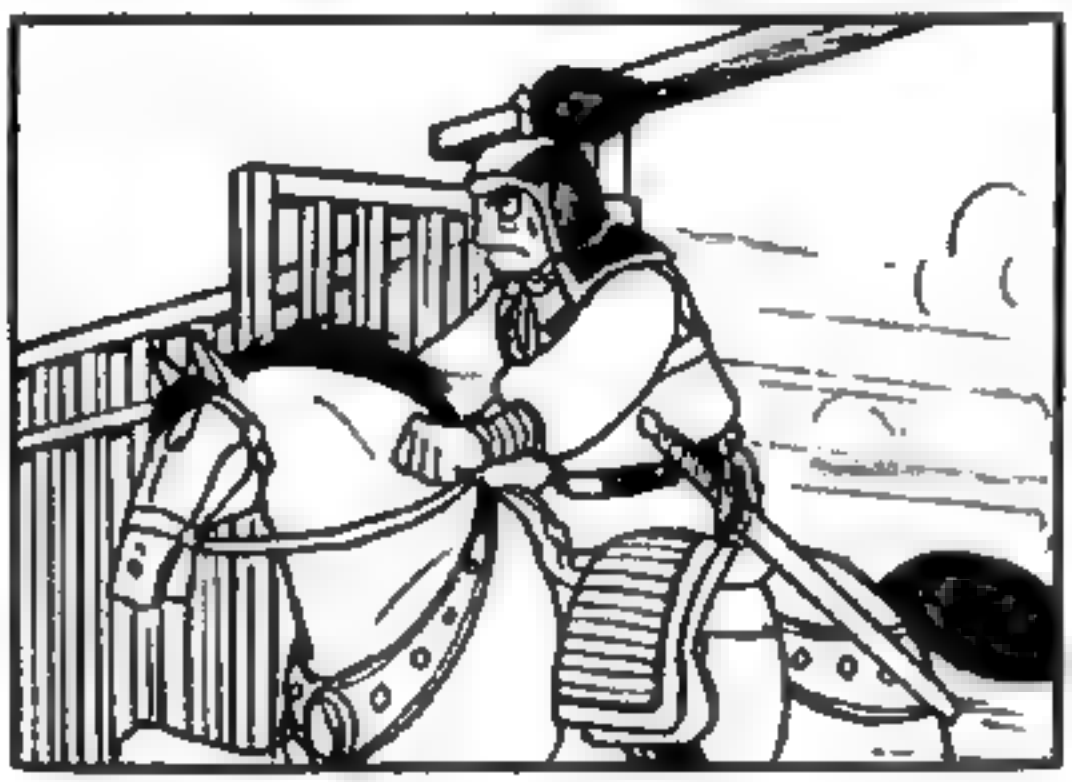
YOU MUST CALM DOWN, YOUR MAJESTY. LU XUN IS NOT INFERIOR TO A LU MENG OR ZHOU YU.

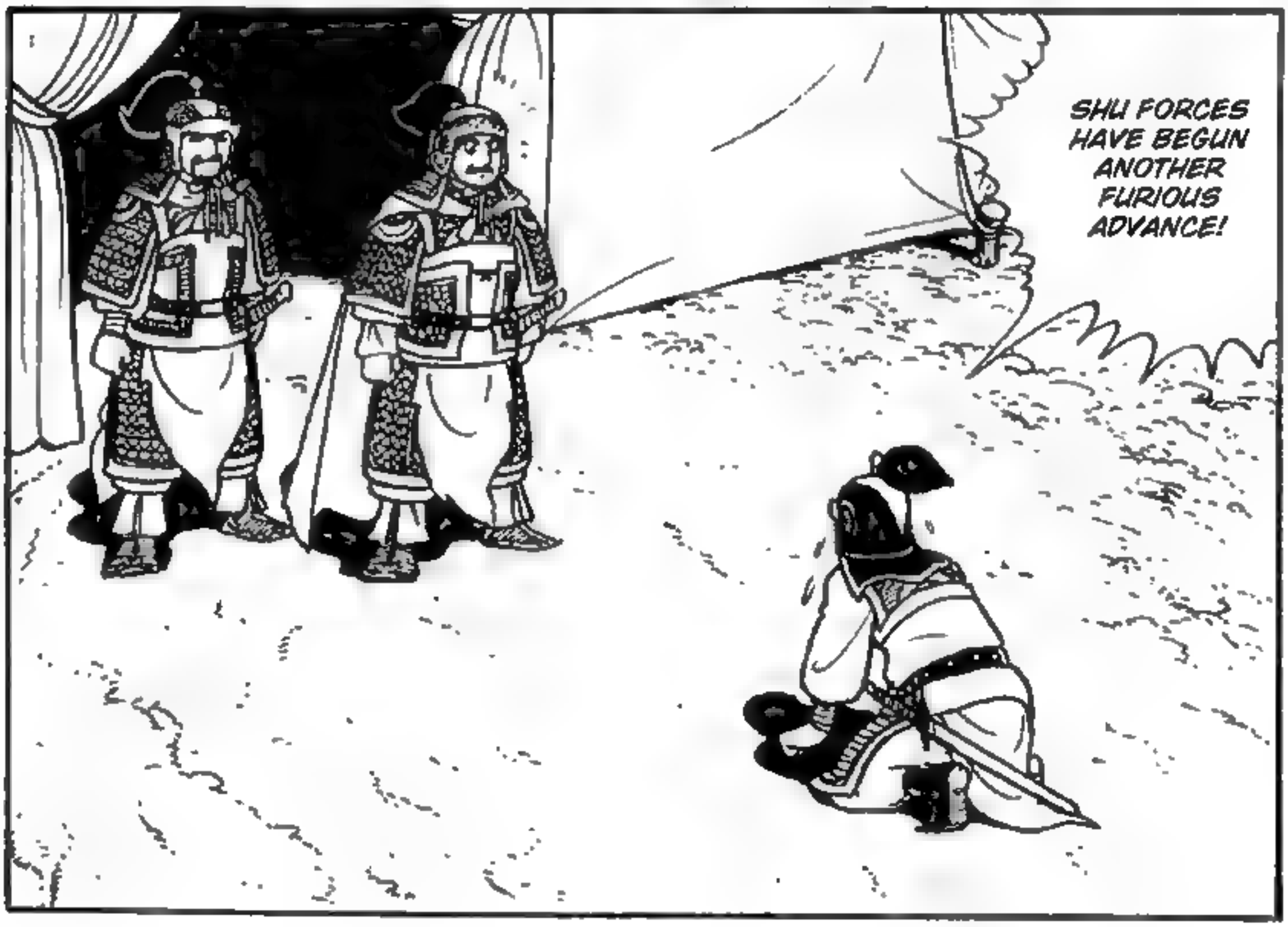
YES, SIR.

ORDER A GENERAL ADVANCE ON LU XUN'S POSITION!



URGENT REPORT!




SHU FORCES HAVE BEGUN ANOTHER FURIOUS ADVANCE!

YES, SIR.

TELL ALL OFFICERS TO TIGHTEN THEIR DEFENSES AND REMIND THEM NOT TO GO ON THE ATTACK!

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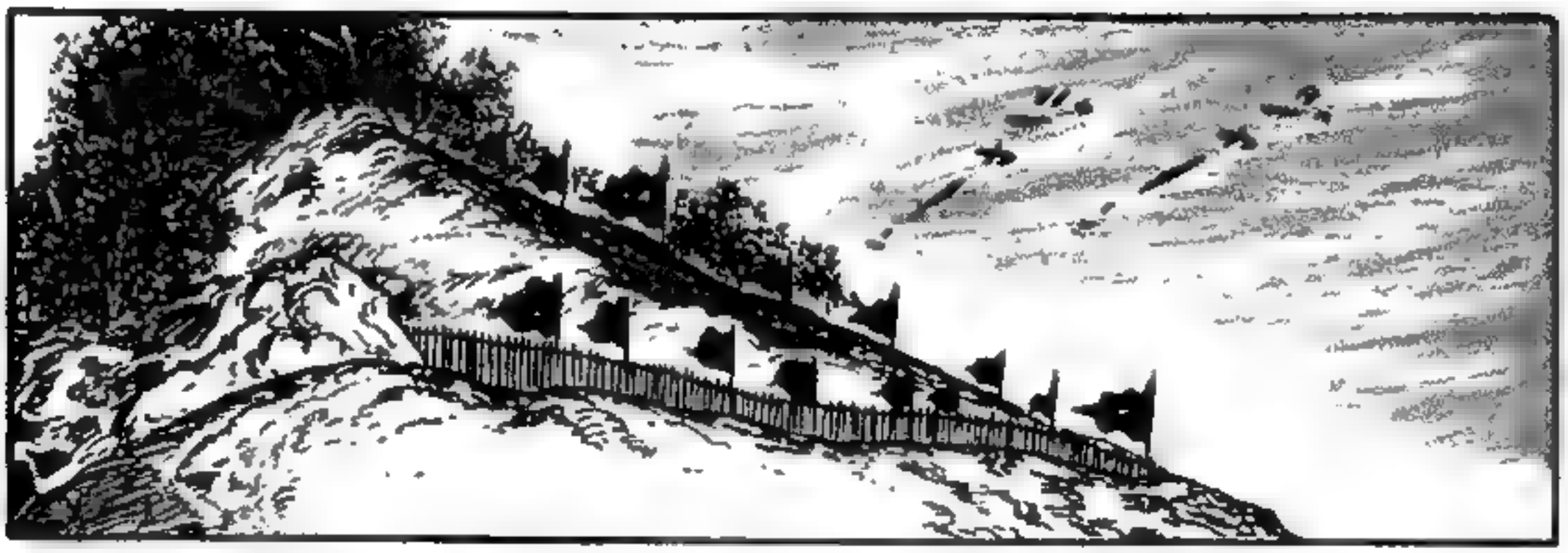


QUICKLY!

YES, AND I HEAR THE DRUM BEATS ORDERING AN ATTACK, COMMANDER.
IS THAT HAN DANG'S CAMP?

COMMANDER!

HAN DANG! YOU DARE DISOBEY MY ORDERS!?

HOW CAN YOU ASK ME TO IGNORE AN ENEMY ARMY ON THE MARCH? THAT IS AGAINST THE FUNDAMENTALS OF WAR! IN FACT, I CAN HARDLY CALL THE FARCE YOU ARE ATTEMPTING A WAR AT ALL!

THAT'S RIGHT! WE MUST STAY ON THE DEFENSE FOR NOW, SINCE ENEMY MORALE IS TOO HIGH AND CANNOT BE EASILY BEATEN BACK. ATTACKING THEM WILL ONLY WEAKEN OUR DEFENSES!

ARE YOU SERIOUSLY ORDERING ME TO IGNORE THE ENEMIES WHO ARE BELOW MY EYES!?

YOU MEAN AMBUSHES!?

TRUE, AN ARMY ON THE MARCH LOOKS VULNERABLE BUT LIU BEI AND HIS LEGIONS OF TALENTED OFFICERS ARE NOT FOOLS. THEY ARE SURE TO HAVE MADE PLANS TO PROTECT THEIR MARCHING COLUMNS.

WAGING A DRAWN-OUT DEFENSIVE WAR IS TO OUR ADVANTAGE.

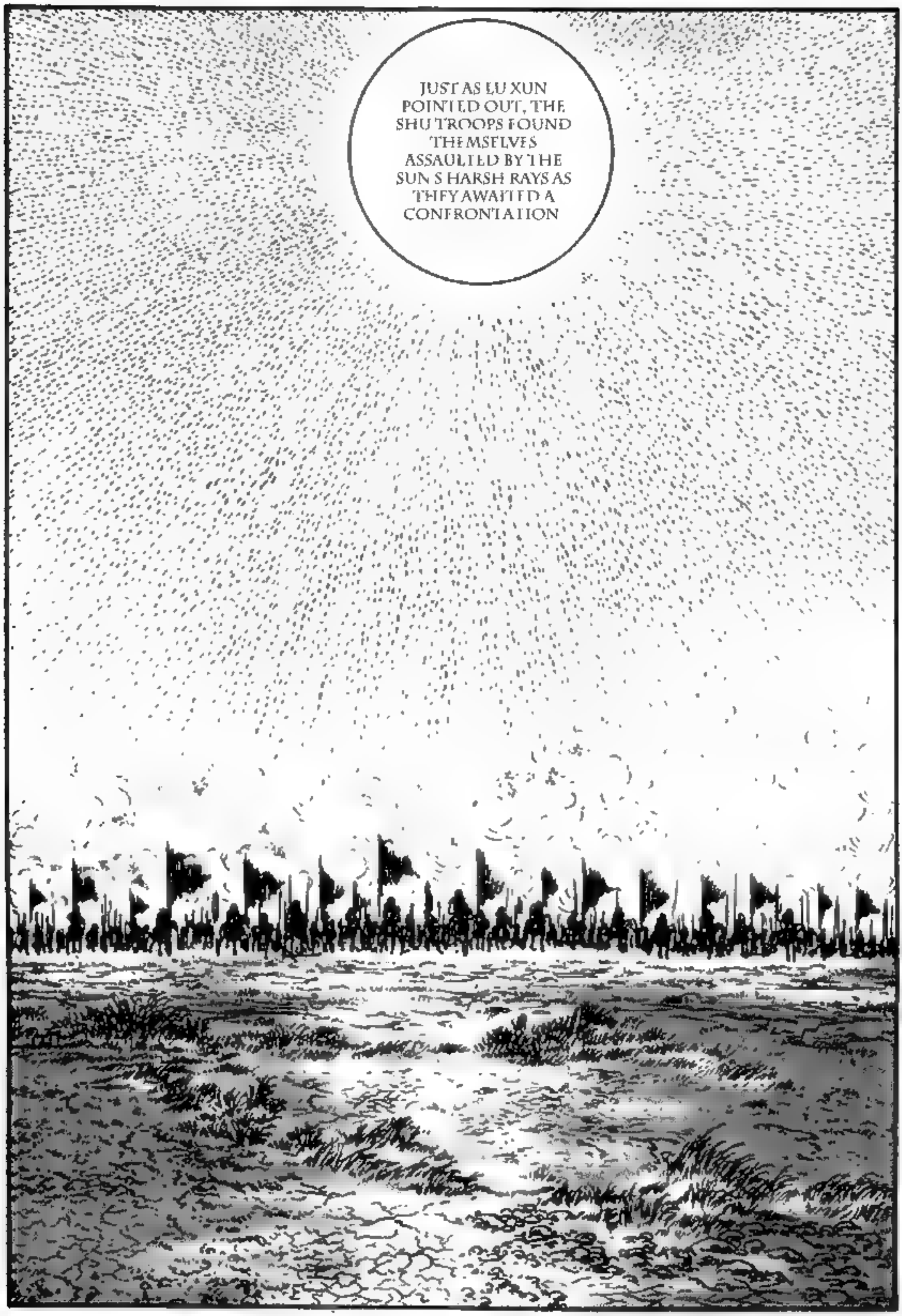
YES, THAT IS WHY IT IS SUICIDAL TO ABANDON OUR SUPERIOR GROUND HERE AND GO ON THE ATTACK.

UNDER THIS SWELTERING HEAT, LIU BEI WILL EVENTUALLY BE FORCED TO MOVE HIS CAMPS TO THE LUSH HILLS, NEAR MOUNTAIN STREAMS. THAT IS WHEN WE WILL STRIKE.

LOOK AT THE CURRENT SUMMER BLAZE.

.....

UNTIL THEN, WE MUST LIE STILL LIKE A MOLE IN ITS HOLE.


JUST AS LU XUN POINTED OUT, THE SHU TROOPS FOUND THEMSELVES ASSAULTED BY THE SUN'S HARSH RAYS AS THEY AWAITED A CONFRONTATION

WAR OF PATIENCE

NO, THEY SEEM DETERMINED TO CONTINUE A DEFENSIVE STRATEGY.
HAVE THE ENEMIES SHOWN ANY INCLINATION TO ATTACK?
YES, SUCH AN ATTACK WOULD BE PYRRHIC AND MAY JEOPARDIZE THE SUCCESS OF THIS ENTIRE CAMPAIGN.
A FRONTAL ATTACK ON THEIR DEFENSIVE POSITIONS WILL PROVE TO BE QUITE COSTLY.

I'VE HAD THE TROOPS PROVOKE THEM WITH INSULTS, BUT LIKE A TURTLE IN ITS SHELL, THE ENEMIES HAVE REMAINED MOTIONLESS.

ISN'T THERE ANY WAY TO MAKE THEM MOVE?

WITH OUR CAMPS FAR FROM A LARGE WATER SOURCE, I FEAR OUR ARMY'S MORALE WILL BE SAPPED DRY.

THERE IS ALSO THE MATTER OF MORE AND MORE OF OUR TROOPS FAINTING FROM THE SUMMER HEAT, YOUR MAJESTY.

HM...

I SUPPOSE IT IS NECESSARY.

I THUS WISH TO PROPOSE THE RELOCATION OF OUR CAMPS TO THE HILLS FOR SHADE AND CLOSER ACCESS TO WATER, YOUR MAJESTY.

YOUR MAJESTY, A SUDDEN WITHDRAWAL OF OUR ENTIRE FORCES FROM OUR CURRENT POSITION WILL SURELY CAUSE LU XUN TO ATTACK OUR REAR.

GET THE MEN READY TO MOVE OUT THEN.

THE ENEMIES WILL BE ENTHUSED BY THIS EASY ROUT AND PURSUE EVEN DEEPER AND WALK RIGHT INTO AN AMBUSH SET BY MY ELITE TROOPS. THUS BY RETREATING, WE WILL ACCOMPLISH THE GOAL OF MAKING THEM ATTACK US.

WORRY NOT, I WILL LEAVE BEHIND A CONTINGENT OF OLD SOLDIERS TO SERVE AS REARGUARDS. THEY WILL BE INSTRUCTED TO FLEE IF THE ENEMIES DO COME TO PURSUE US.

A SEEMINGLY WISE PLAN, BUT PERHAPS IT WOULD BE BEST TO CONSULT WITH KONGMING BEFORE TAKING ANY ACTION.

YES, IT'S A CLEVER WAY TO FORCE THE DECISIVE BATTLE.

A SPLENDID IDEA, YOUR MAJESTY.

MA LIANG, CONSULTING WITH A MAN SO FAR FROM THE BATTLEFRONT IS ONLY DETRIMENTAL TO THE EXECUTION OF WAR.

I HEAR KONGMING IS CURRENTLY ALL THE WAY OUT IN HANZHONG TO INSPECT THE FRONTIER DEFENSES.

YES, YOUR MAJESTY.

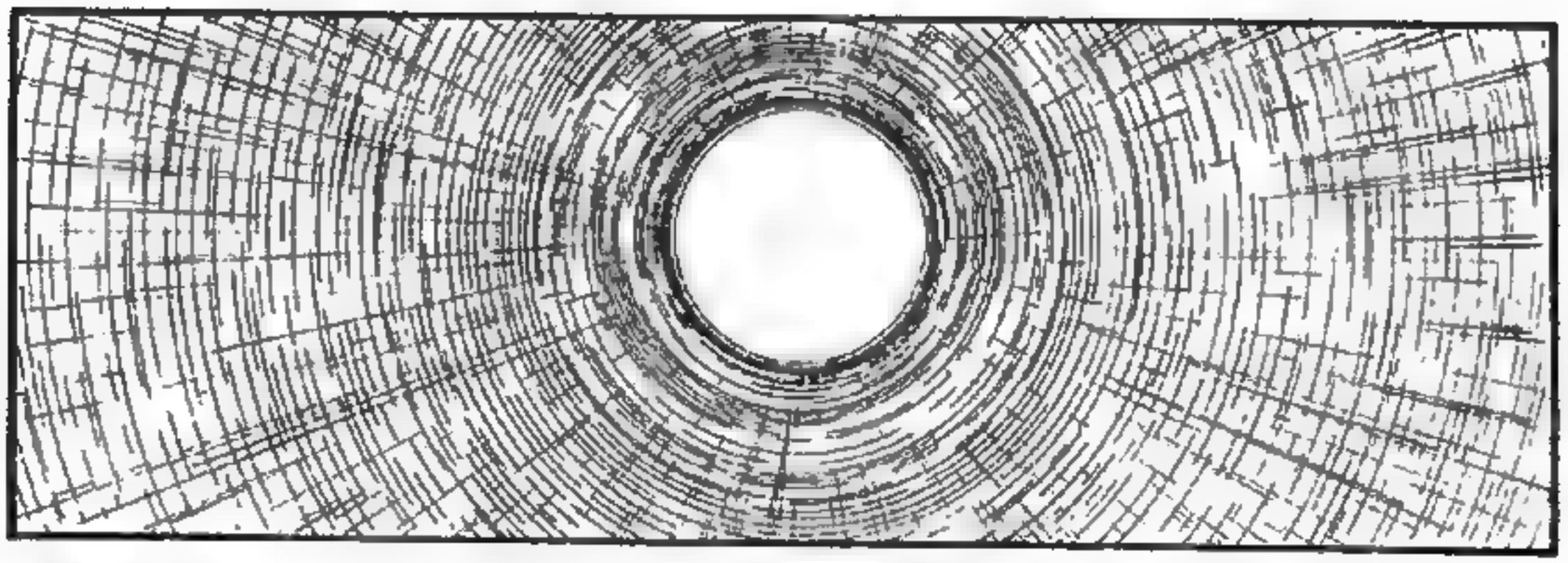
THAT BEING SAID, IF KONGMING IS IN HANZHONG AT THE MOMENT, THEN THERE SHOULDN'T BE SUCH A LONG DELAY. GO AND BRING BACK HIS OPINIONS ON OUR CURRENT CIRCUMSTANCES AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

YES, SIR.

AS FOR THE REST OF YOU, PREPARE TO RELOCATE CAMPS.

MAKE ALL PREPARATIONS!

HIS MAJESTY HAS ORDERED A RELOCATION OF OUR CAMPS!

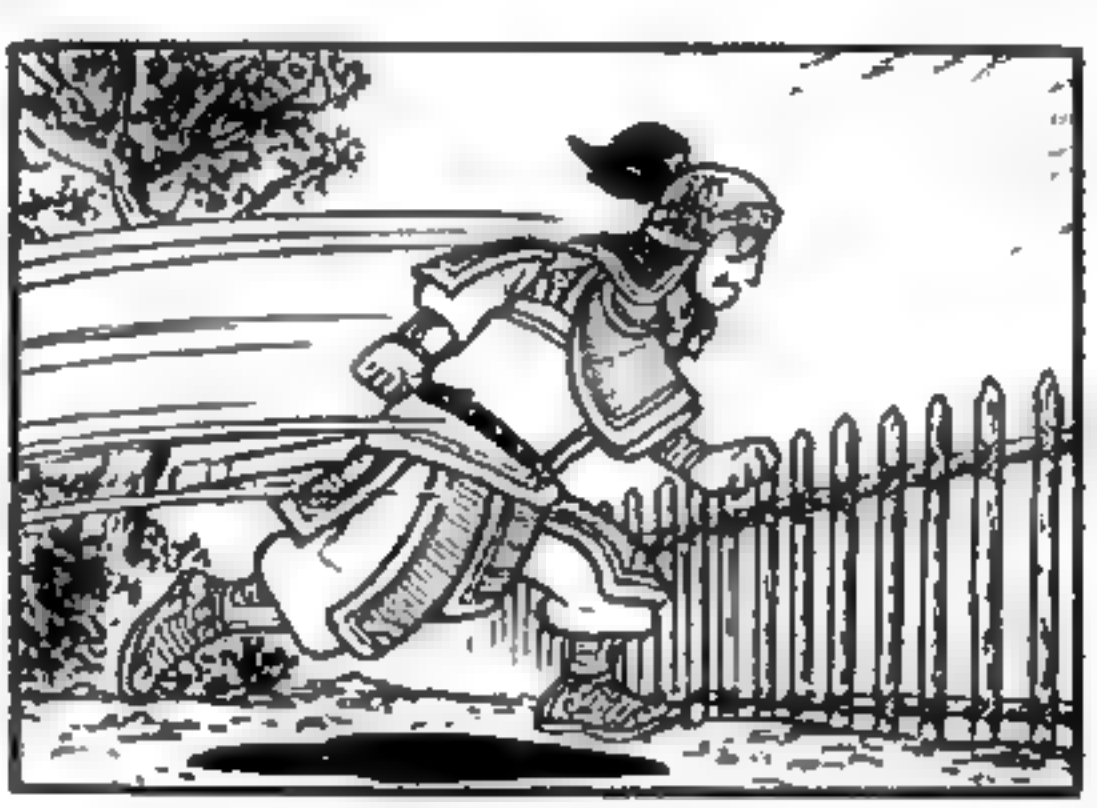


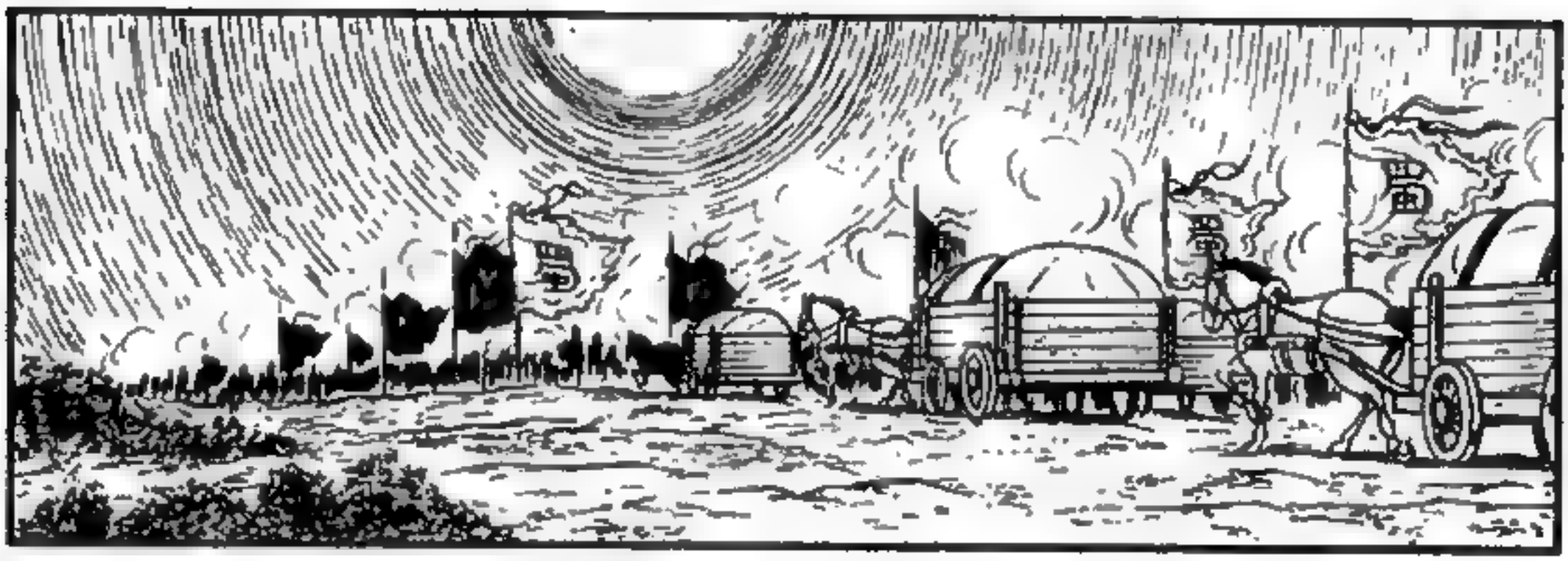
THE SHU ARMY HAS AT LAST DECIDED TO MOVE THEIR CAMPS TO THE HILLS!

GENERAL HAN DANG!

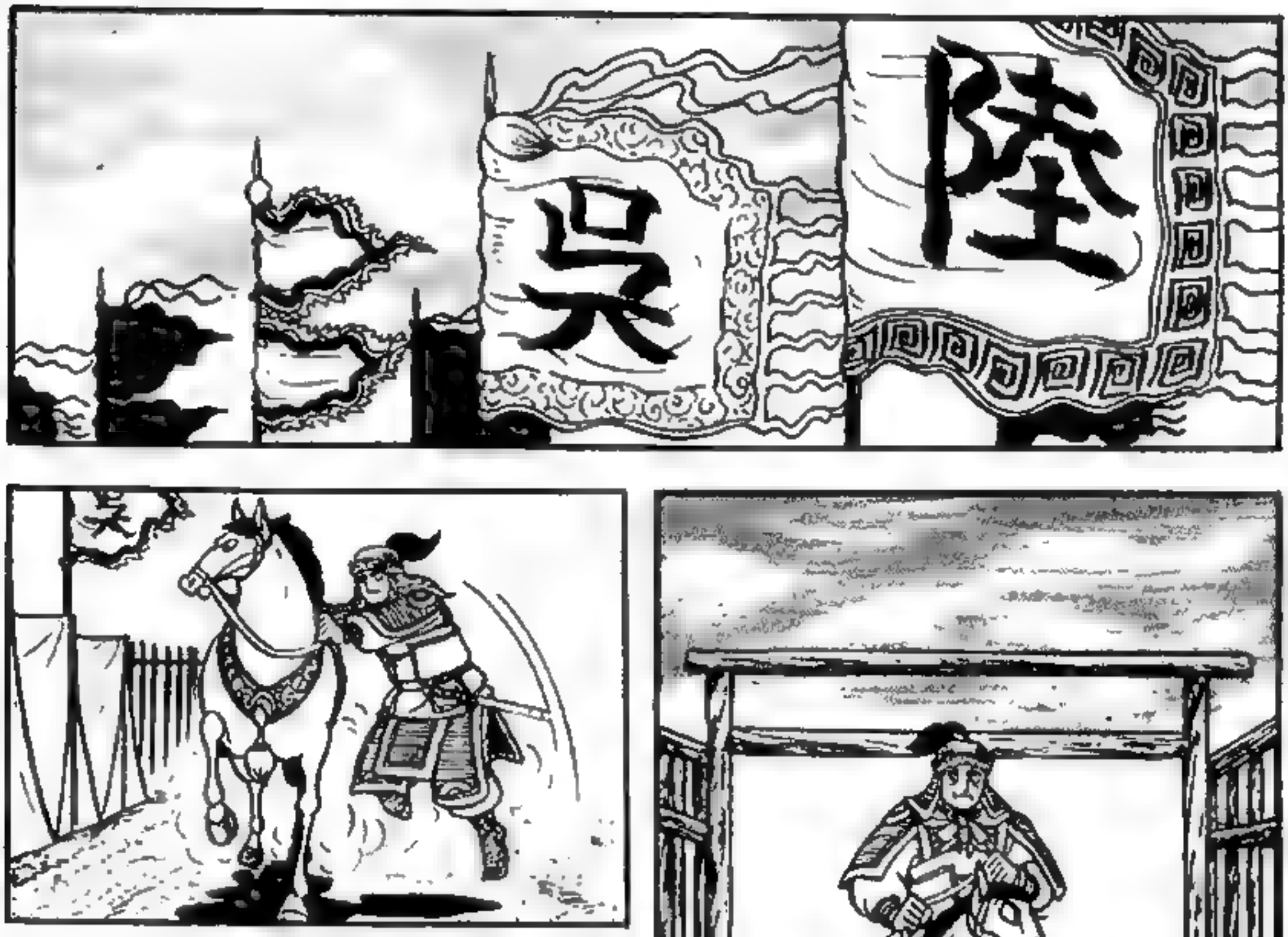
WHAT!

OHH!





YES, SIR.
GET MY HORSE!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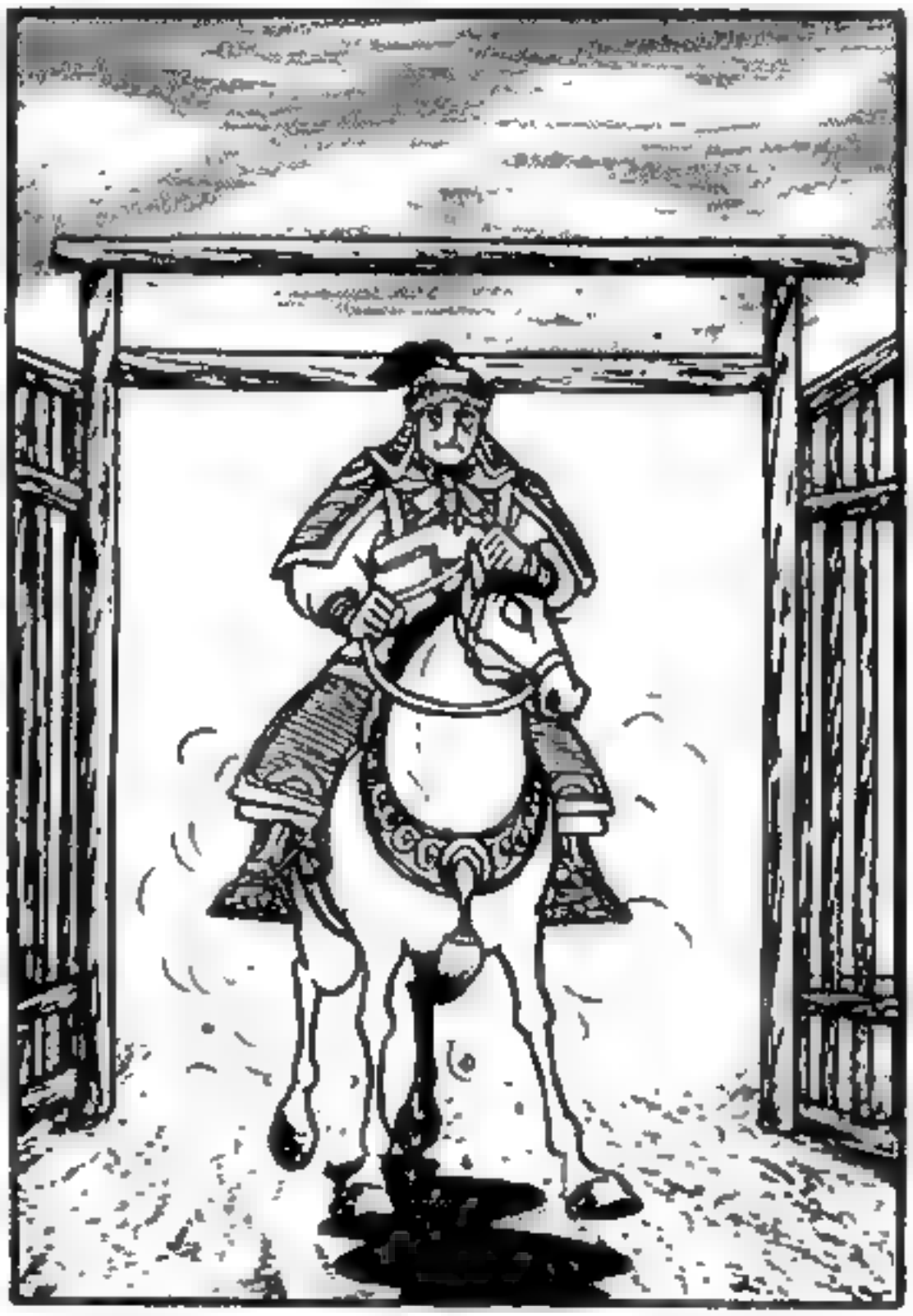

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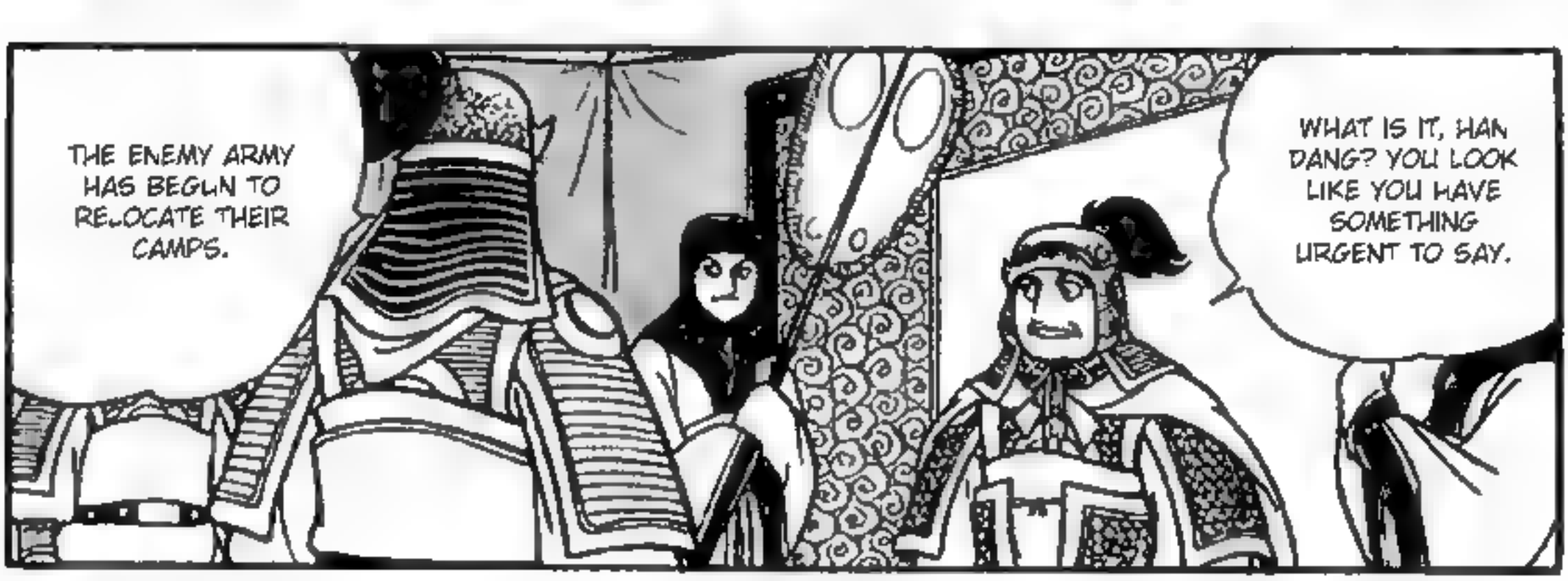
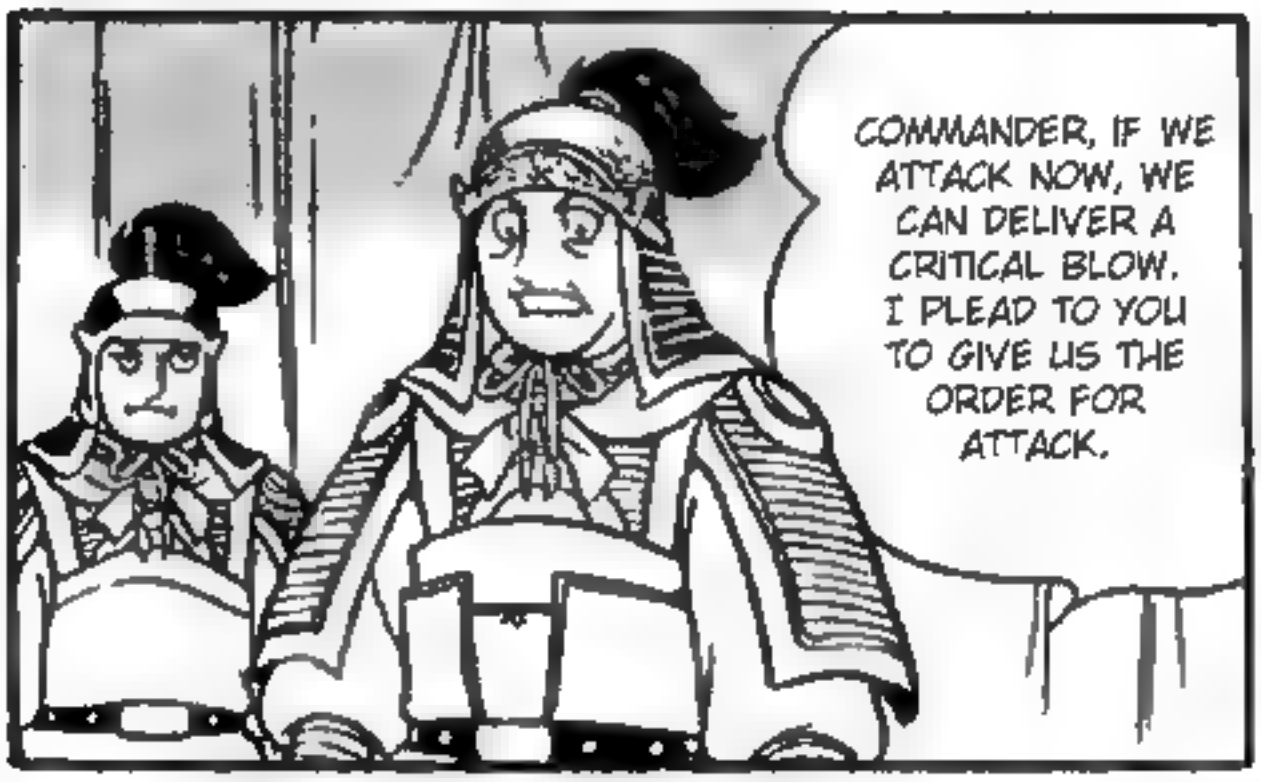
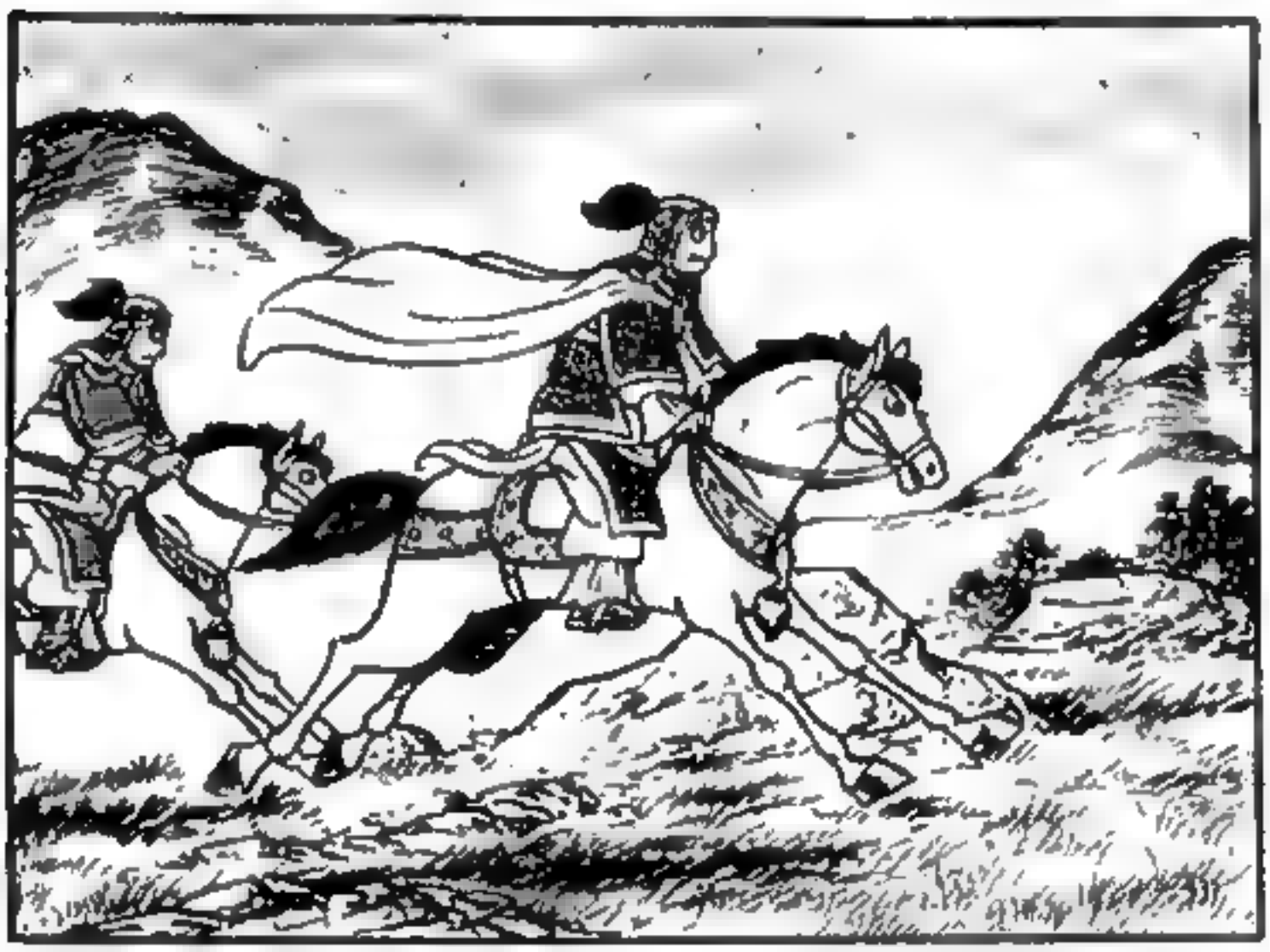
MANDER!

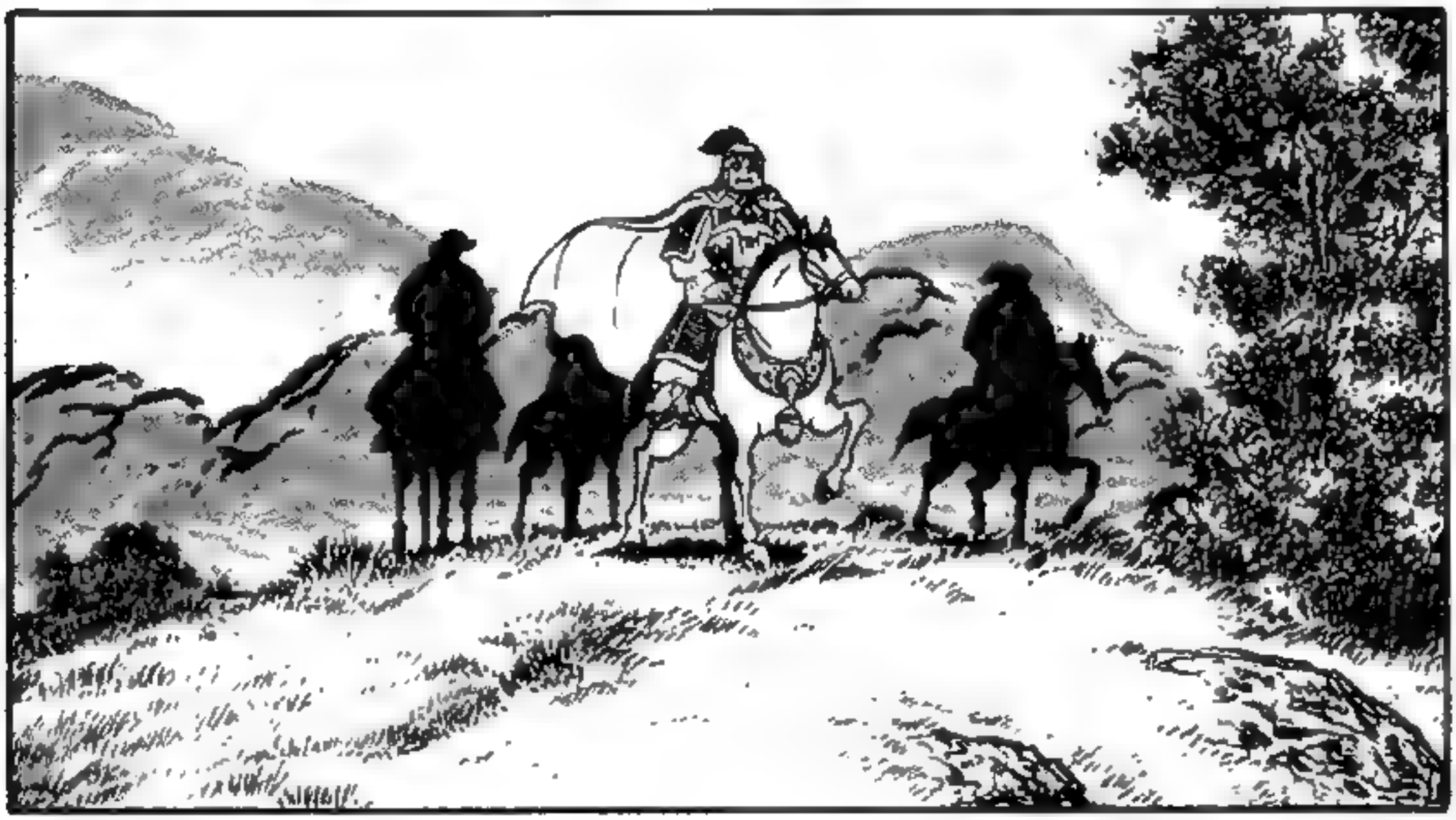

THE ENEMY ARMY HAS BEGUN TO RELOCATE THEIR CAMPS.
WHAT IS IT, HAN DANG? YOU LOOK LIKE YOU HAVE SOMETHING URGENT TO SAY.


COMMANDER, IF WE ATTACK NOW, WE CAN DELIVER A CRITICAL BLOW. I PLEAD TO YOU TO GIVE US THE ORDER FOR ATTACK.

AH, IS THAT SO?



I MUST SEE THE SITUA-TION FIRST BEFORE DECIDING.



THEY BARELY HAVE 10,000 MEN HERE NOW.

THEIR FORCES HERE HAVE ALREADY THINNED SO MUCH.

HMM.

NOW IS NOT THE TIME TO BE PRAISING OUR ENEMIES, COMMANDER! IF WE DO NOT ATTACK NOW, WE WILL ALLOW A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY TO SLIP PAST OUR FINGERS!

A TACTICAL WITHDRAWAL IS THE MOST DIFFICULT OF ALL MILITARY MANEUVERS. THE R EXECUTION IS IMPECCABLE!

3 DAYS?

NO, WAIT AT LEAST 3 DAYS FIRST.

GRANT ME JUST 10,000 TROOPS TO ATTACK WITH.

IN 3 DAYS, THE ENEMY ARMY WILL HAVE FULLY WITHDRAWN FROM HERE!

LOOK CLOSELY AT THEIR FORCES LEFT BEHIND. IT'S FULL OF FRAIL, OLD MEN.

THE REARGUARD IN AN ARMY HAS THE MOST DIFFICULT DUTY OF COVERING A RETREAT, EVEN IF IT MEANS SACRIFICING THEIR LIVES. HOWEVER, LIU BEI HAS CHOSEN SPECIFICALLY TO ASSIGN HIS OLDEST SOLDIERS FOR THIS TASK, MEANING...

I FORBID ALL IDEAS OF ATTACK.

IT'S LIKELY A TRAP TO ENTICE US INTO ATTACKING. ENEMY TROOPS ARE HIDDEN FURTHER UP AHEAD FOR AN AMBUSH.

I STILL CAN'T UNDERSTAND WHY HIS HIGHNESS APPOINTED THAT COWARD AS OUR COMMANDER!

THE TWISTED LOGIC OF A SCHOLAR WITH NO REAL EXPERIENCE OTHER THAN PLAYING ARMCHAIR GENERAL.

DID YOU HEAR THAT, ZHOU TAI!?

HOW CAN WE WIN THIS WAR IF WE WASTE THESE FEW GOOD CHANCES?

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I THOUGHT MEN OF THE SOUTH WERE SUPPOSED TO HAVE SOME BALLS?

YAAAWN... ARE THEY EVER GONNA ATTACK US OR WHAT?

MAYBE THEIR CAMPS ARE FULL OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN!

THOSE WEAPONS OF YOURS ALL JUST FOR SHOW? DO YOU EVEN KNOW HOW TO SWING A SWORD!?

HEEEEYYY! WHAT'S THE MATTER!? YOU SCARED OF US THAT MUCH!?

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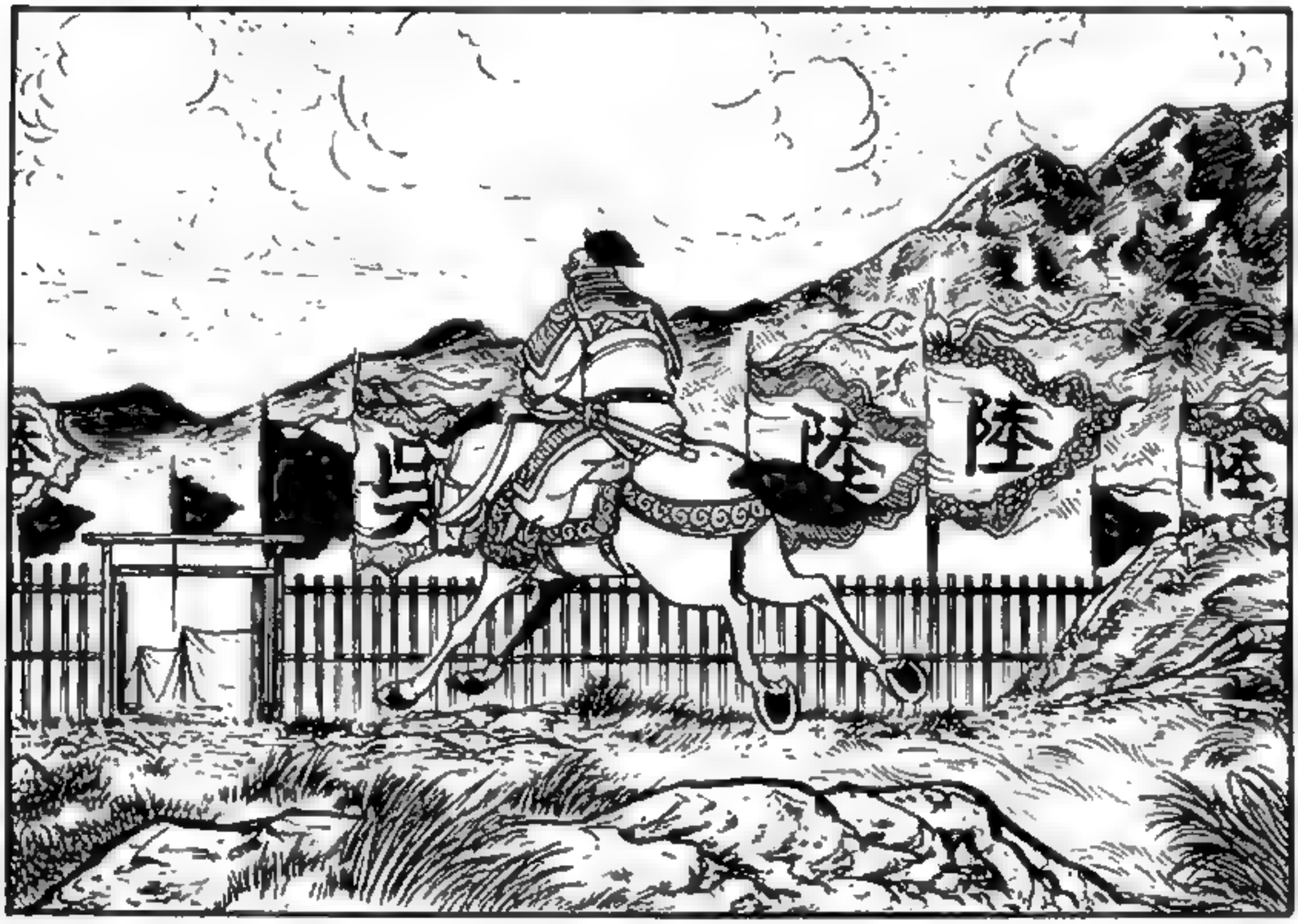
I WILL NOT SUFFER THIS HUMILIATION MUCH LONGER! I'LL PLEAD WITH THE COMMANDER ONCE MORE.

SONS OF BITCHES...



COM-
MANDER!

WHAT IS IT,
HAN DANG?

TO DEFEND OUR LANDS WITHOUT SHEDDING UNNECESSARY BLOOD, IS THIS NOT THE HIGHEST FORM OF VICTORY?

I HAVE COME TO ASK WHAT YOUR NEXT MOVE WILL BE ONCE THE ENEMY HAS FULLY RETREATED?

LIU BE IS A MAN WHO ROSE FROM A PEASANT TO AN EMPEROR. HE CANNOT BE UNDERESTIMATED.

HOW CAN YOU NOT SEE THAT THIS IS OUR ONLY CHANCE TO DELIVER SHU A CRITICAL DEFEAT! AND THAT WITHOUT DOING SO, OUR LANDS WILL BE CONTINUALLY IN DANGER!?

WE MUST USE TIME TO OUR ADVANTAGE AND LET HIM SUFFER THE PROBLEMS OF CAMPAIGNING IN THE HOT SUMMER.

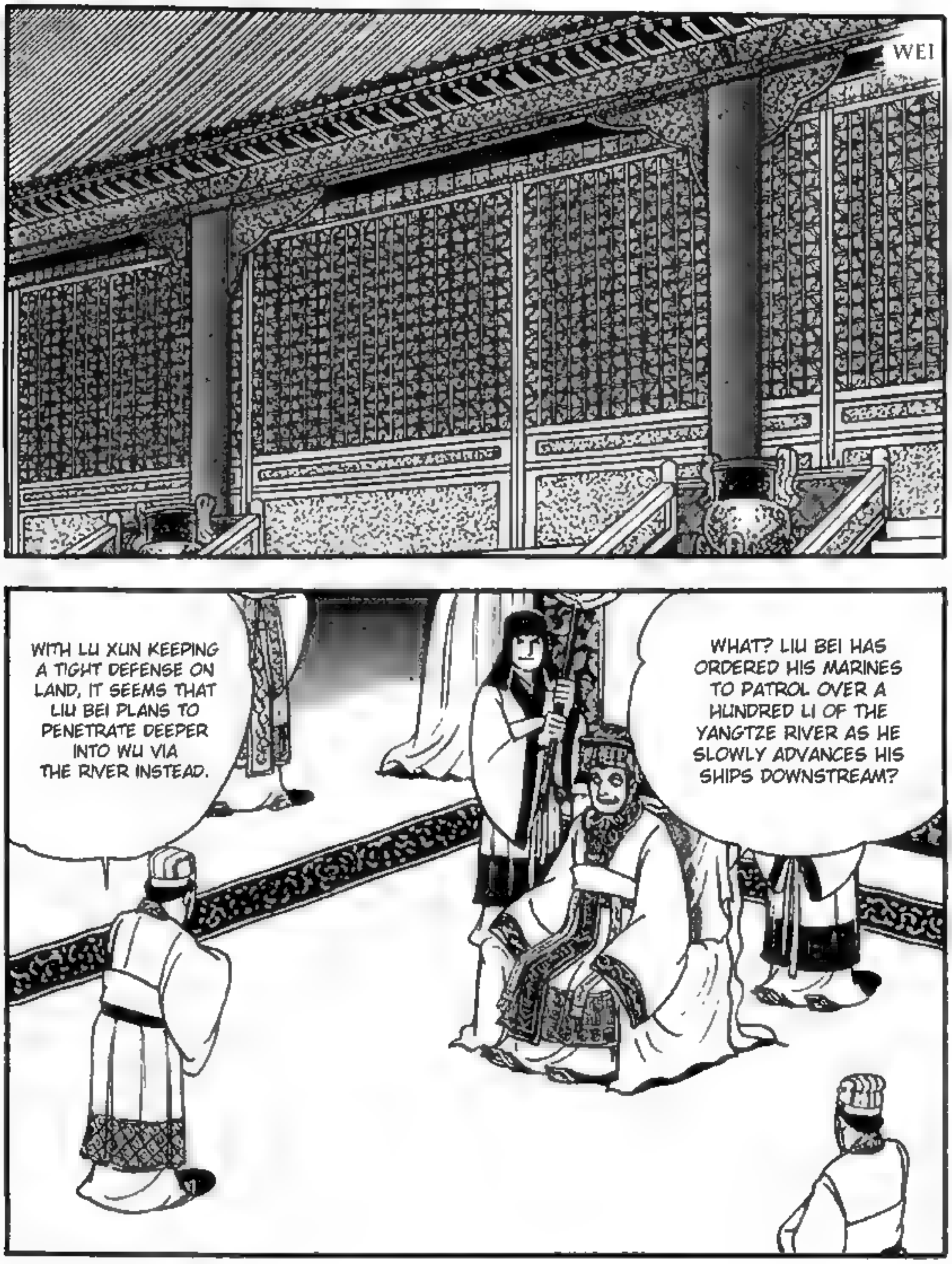
AS LONG AS HIS TROOPS REMAIN IN TIGHT ORDER WITH HIGH DISCIPLINE AND MORALE, THEY CANNOT BE BROKEN.

WHAT A WASTE OF MY TIME...

YOUR STRATEGY IS ROOTED IN IMPRACTICAL THEORY, NOT EXPERIENCE!

THIS WAR WILL NEVER BE WON AS LONG AS YOU CONTINUE TO AVOID ALL FIGHTS!

ATTACK BY FIRE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WITH LU XUN KEEPING A TIGHT DEFENSE ON LAND, IT SEEMS THAT LIU BEI PLANS TO PENETRATE DEEPER INTO WU VIA THE RIVER INSTEAD.
WHAT? LIU BEI HAS ORDERED HIS MARINES TO PATROL OVER A HUNDRED LI OF THE YANGTZE RIVER AS HE SLOWLY ADVANCES HIS SHIPS DOWNSTREAM?

WHAT DOES YOUR MAJESTY MEAN BY THAT?

HAHAHA, HOW AMUSING! IT SEEMS LIU BEI WISHES TO DIG HIS OWN GRAVE!

IS IT NOT OBVIOUS? THE SHU FORCES ON LAND ARE ALREADY CAMPED AT OVER 40 LOCATIONS, WHICH STRETCHES FOR OVER 700 LI. BUT WITH THE EXTENSION OF HIS MARINE FORCES, LIU BEI HAS NOW STRETCHED HIS ENTIRE FORCE OF 750,000 TROOPS ACROSS A LENGTH OF OVER 800 LI! EVEN THE GRANDEST OF ARMIES WOULD BE REDUCED TO PAPER THIN LINES WHEN STRETCHED THAT FAR.

IS THAT REALLY SO, YOUR MAJESTY?

LU XUN CAN NOW EASILY ACHIEVE LOCAL SUPERIOR-ITY IN NUMBERS AND DELIVER SHU AN ENORMOUS BLOW.

THE TIME HAS FINALLY COME FOR ME TO TAKE WU!

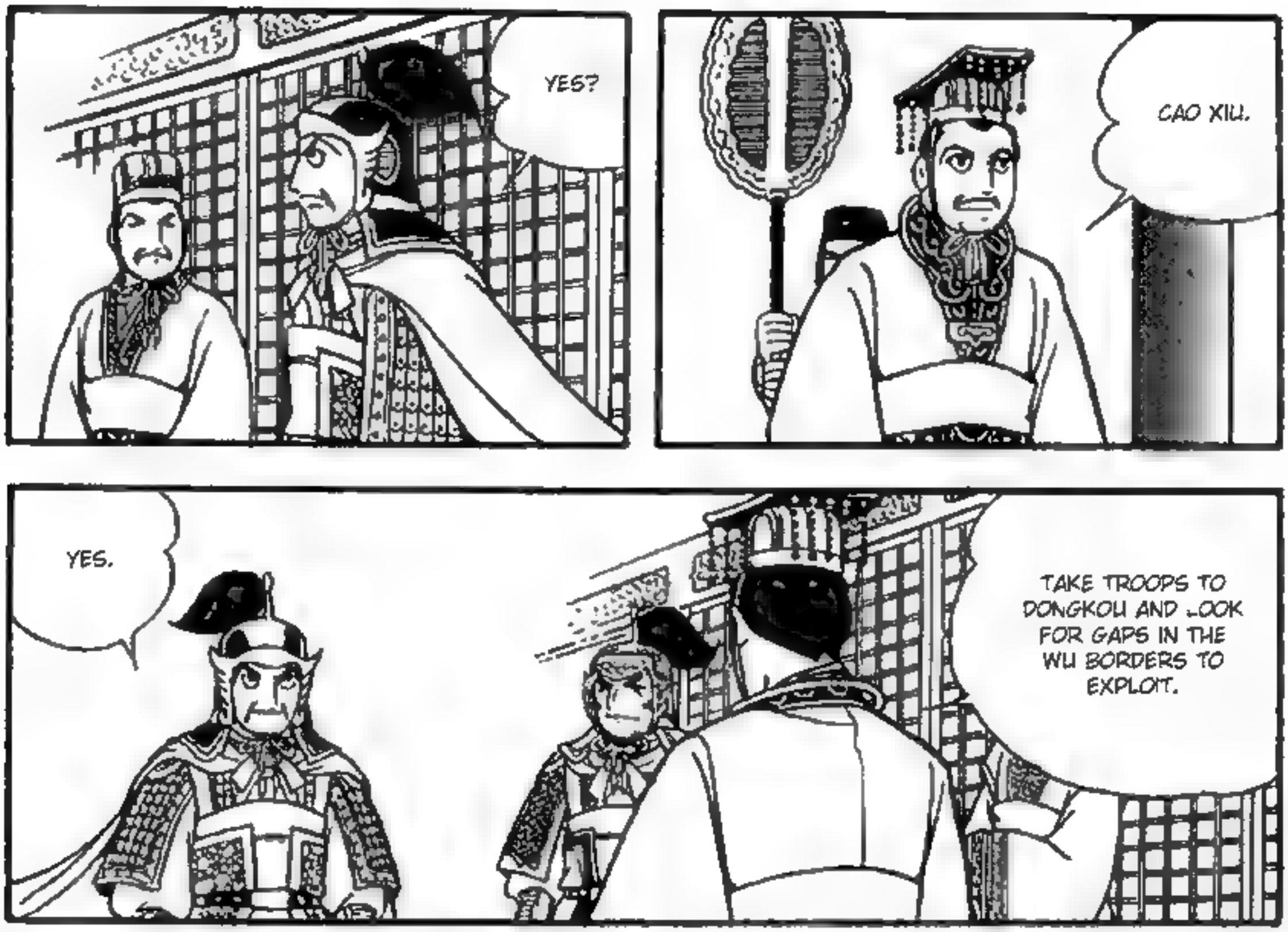
HAHA... ONCE WU DEFEATS THE SHU INVASION, THEY WILL SURELY USE THE MOMENTUM TO INVADE SHU IN TURN. THIS IS A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY I CANNOT IGNORE.

YES, YOUR MAJESTY.

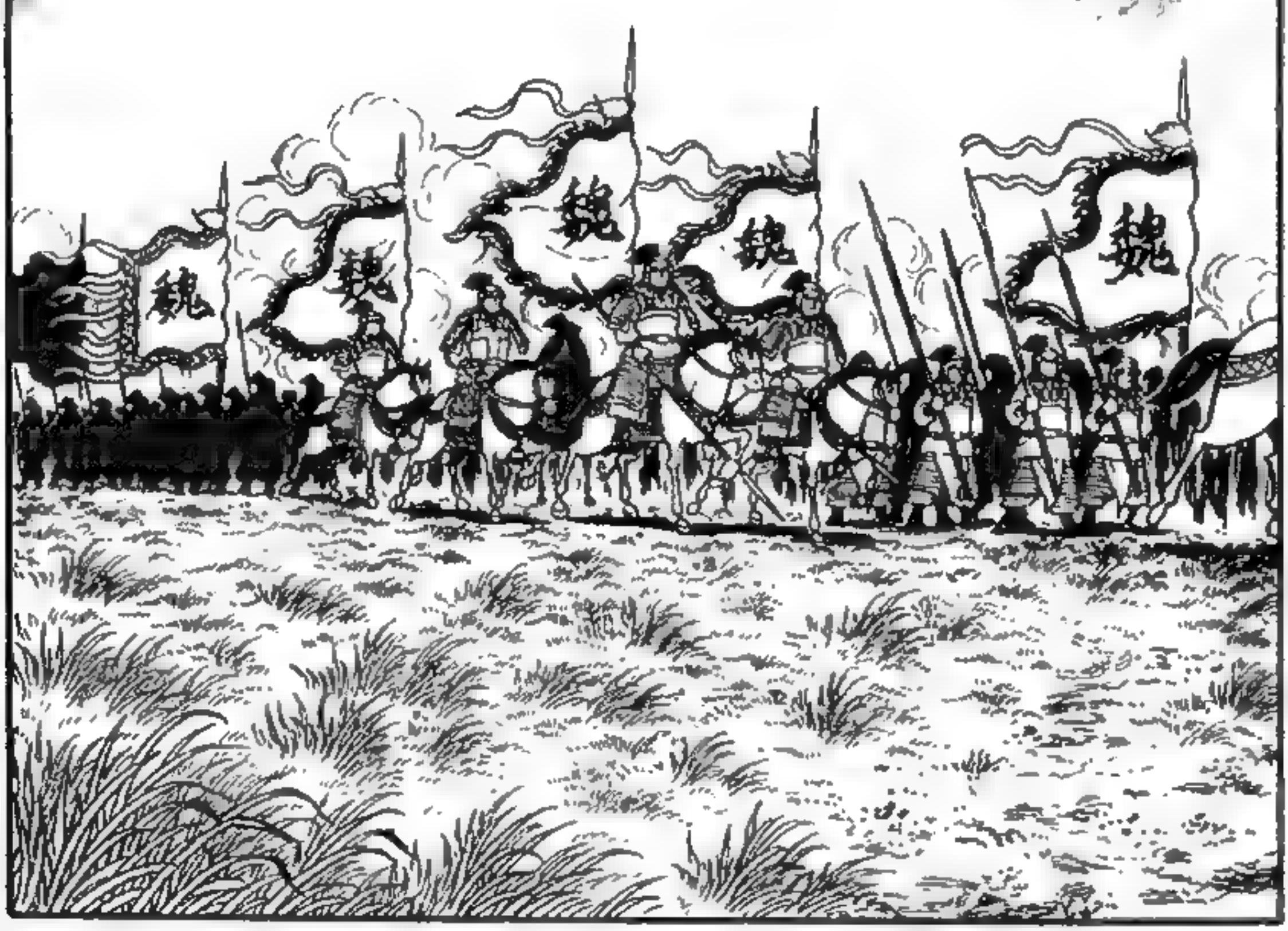
HEAD TO RUXU AND BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR GAPS IN WU'S BORDER DEFENSES.

CAO REN!

YES?


YES?
CAO XIU.
YES.
TAKE TROOPS TO DONGKOU AND LOOK FOR GAPS IN THE WU BORDERS TO EXPLOIT.
YES.
CAO ZHEN. YOU WILL DO THE SAME IN NANJUN.
ONCE SUN QUAN CHASES AFTER HIS WOUNDED PREY IN SHU, MY ARMIES WILL BE POISED TO OVERRUN WU'S NORTHERN FRONTIER. A FULL REUNIFICATION OF THE REALM IS NOT FAR...

THE WEI ARMY, SPLIT ALONG 3 ROUTES FROM RUXU, DONGKOU, AND NANJUN, INCHED CLOSER TOWARDS WU, LOOKING FOR THE IDEAL CHANCE TO MOUNT A FULL-SCALE INVASION



HANZHONG

WELCOME, MA LIANG. IT IS GOOD TO SEE YOU.

WITH LU XUN ORDERING WU FORCES TO MAINTAIN A SOLID DEFENSE ON LAND, HIS MAJESTY HAS DECIDED TO KEEP HIS FORCE ON CAMPED IN OVER 40 BASES BY HILLS AND RIVERS AND INSTEAD USE THE MARINES TO SPEARHEAD THE ASSAULT BY SAILING DOWN THE YANGTZE RIVER.

HOW IS THE CAMPAIGN PROGRESSING?

HIS MAJESTY HIMSELF FORMULATED THE PLAN.

WHO CAME UP WITH SUCH A STRATEGY?

WHAT!?

WHATEVER DO YOU MEAN?

BOTH THE ARMY AND HIS MAJESTY ARE IN GRAVE DANGER!

TWO, CAMPING IN DENSELY WOODEN GROUND WITH CLIFFS, HILLS, OR STREAMS TO THE REAR IS A CLASSIC BLUNDER. THREE, STRETCHING OUT AN ARMY SO THINLY COMPROMISES BOTH OFFENSIVE AND DEFENSIVE CAPABILITIES, AS IT WILL BE UNABLE TO DETER CONCENTRATED ENEMY ATTACKS. I DOUBT LU XUN COULD OVERLOOK ALL THREE OF THESE GRAVE MISTAKES.

ONE, SAILING DOWNSTREAM A RIVER WILL MAKE FOR A SWIFT INVASION BUT WILL MAKE A RETREAT DANGEROUSLY SLOW.

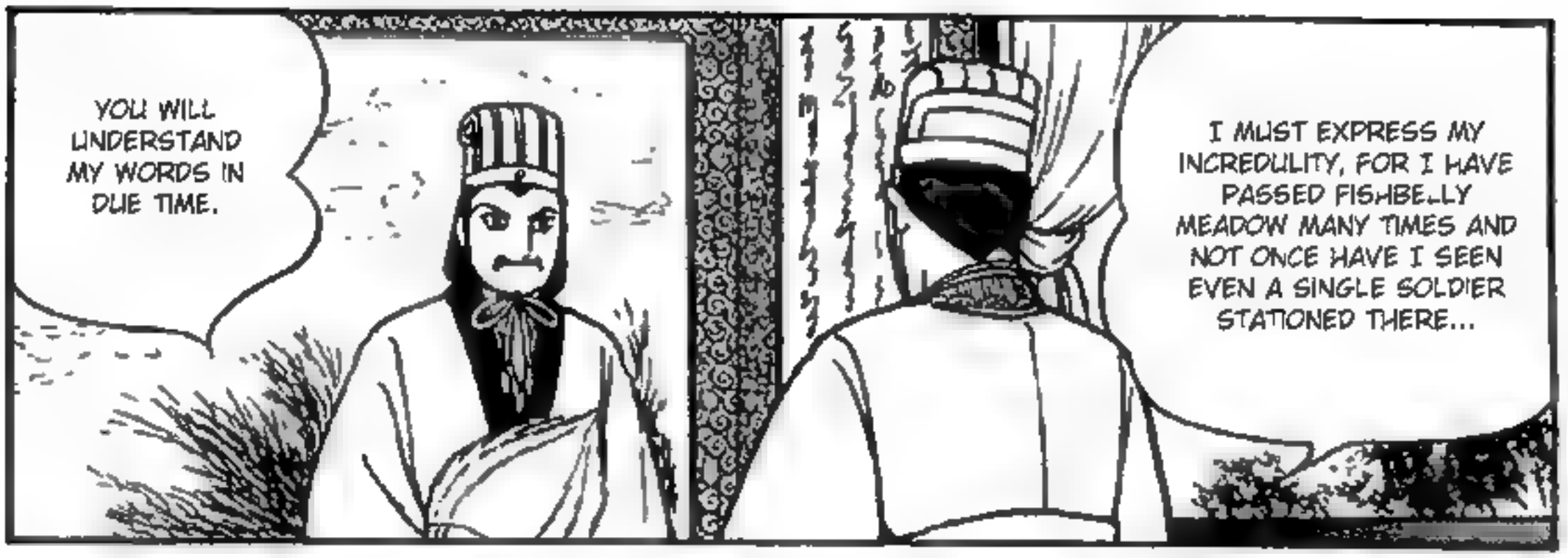
...BUT WHAT IF THE SHU ARMY WERE TO BE DEFEATED BY THE TIME I RETURNED?

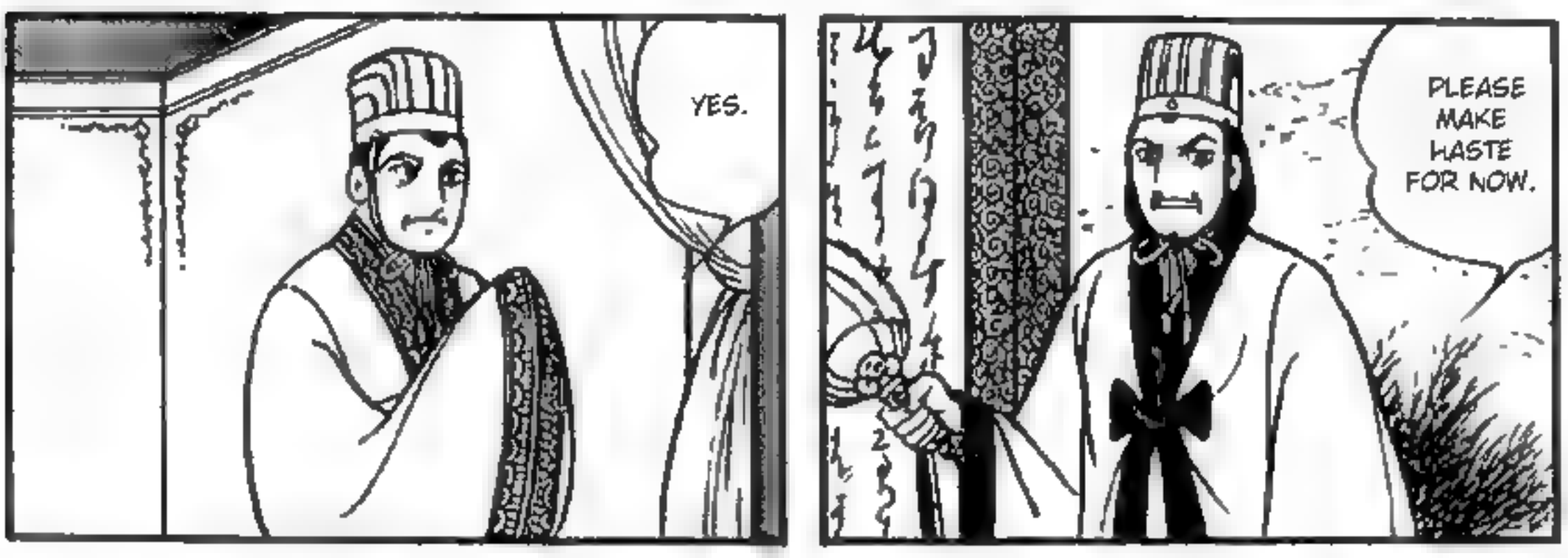
YES.

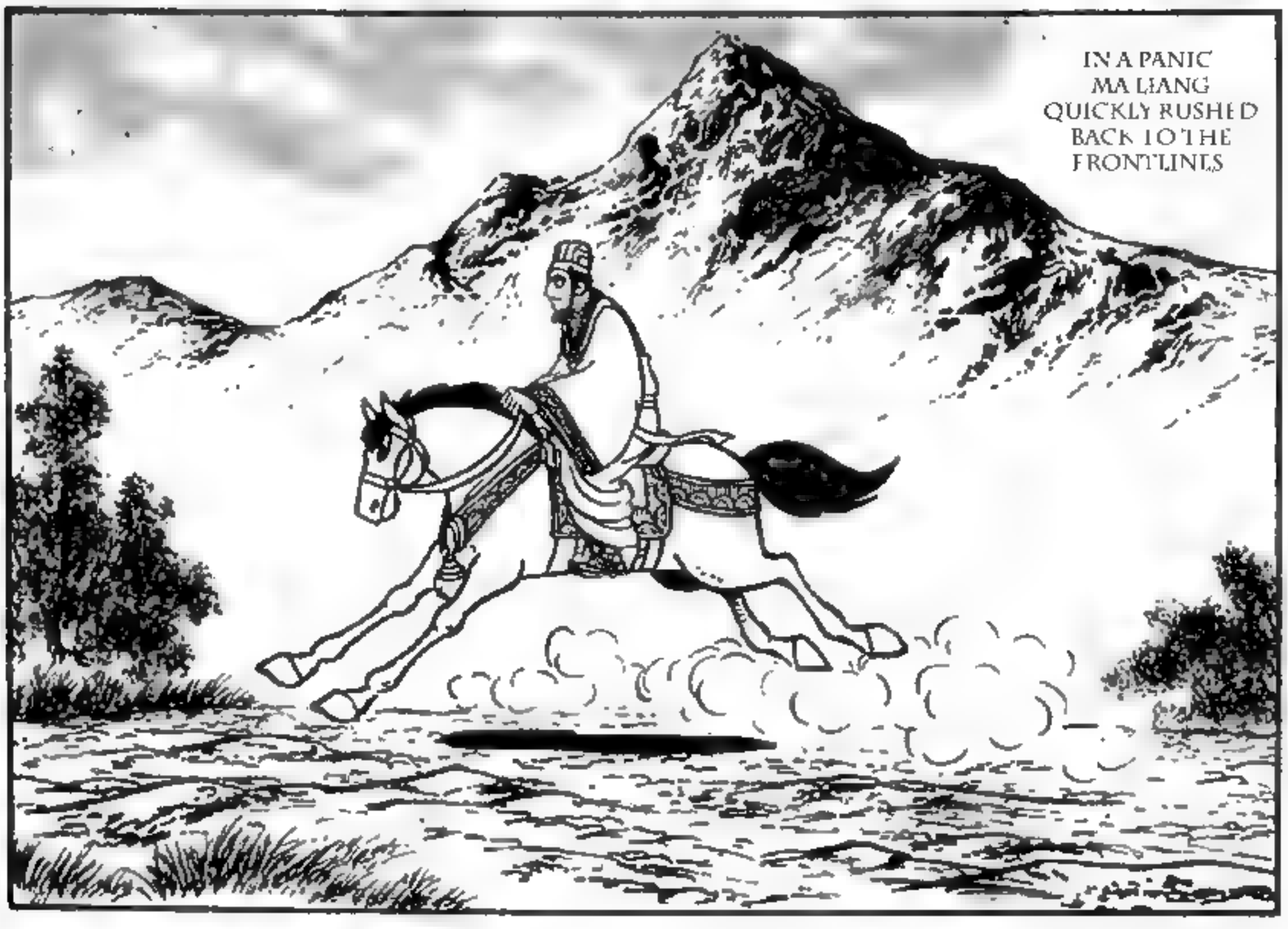
RETURN TO HIS MAJESTY AT ONCE TO WARN HIM OF HIS MISTAKES!

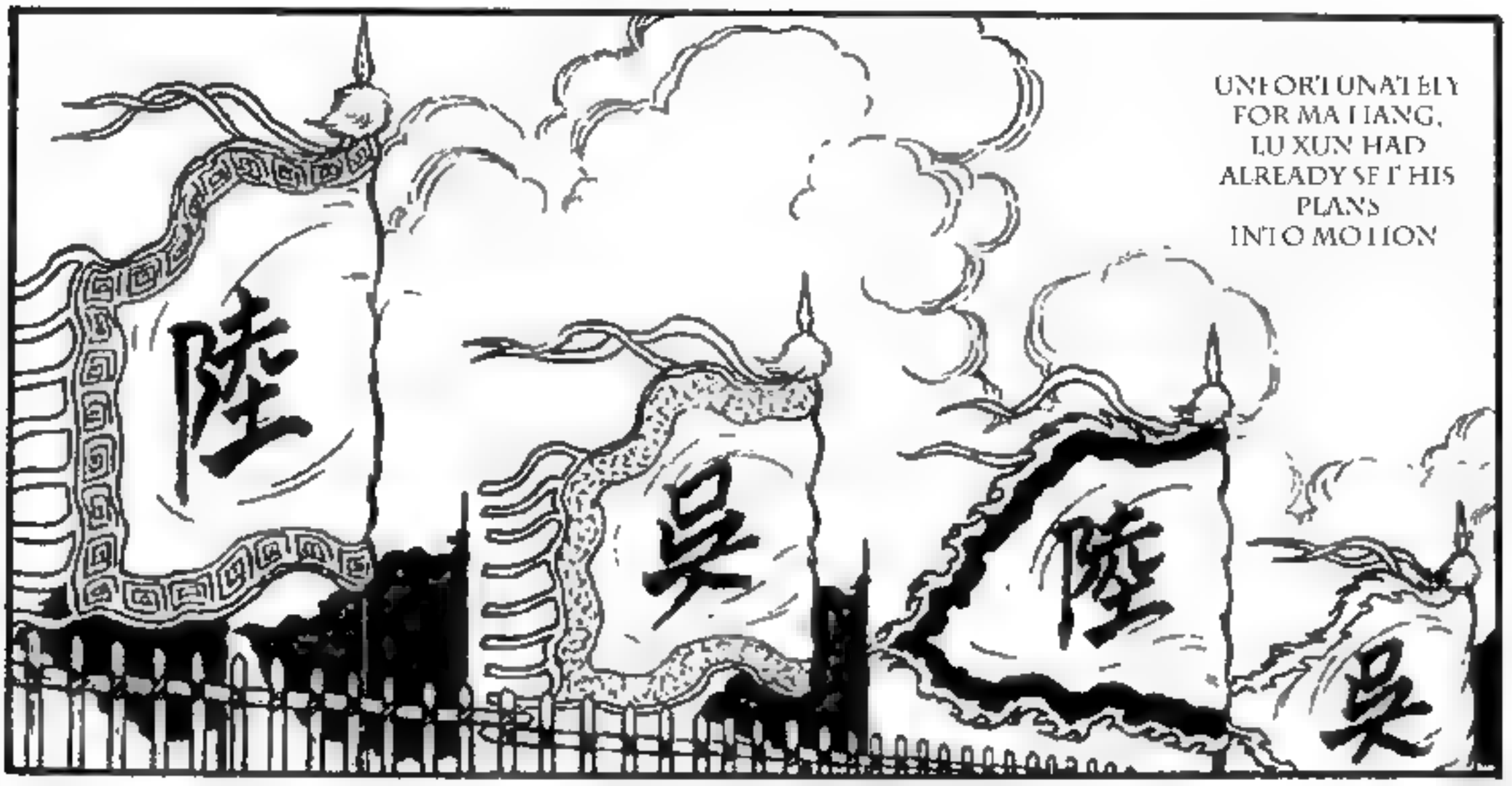
NEAR THERE IS A PLACE CALLED FISHBELLY MEADOW, WHERE I HAVE HIDDEN AN ARMY. IF LU XUN TRIES TO PURSUE OUR RETREATING ARMY, HE WILL BE STOPPED THERE.

THEN YOU MUST SAFELY ESCORT HIS HIGHNESS TO BAIDICHENG, WHERE HE CAN FIND SHELTER.


YOU WILL UNDERSTAND MY WORDS IN DUE TIME.
I MUST EXPRESS MY INCREDULITY, FOR I HAVE PASSED FISHBELLY MEADOW MANY TIMES AND NOT ONCE HAVE I SEEN EVEN A SINGLE SOLDIER STATIONED THERE...


YES.
PLEASE MAKE HASTE FOR NOW.


IN A PANIC MA LIANG QUICKLY RUSHED BACK TO THE FRONTLINES


UNFORTUNATELY FOR MA LIANG, LU XUN HAD ALREADY SET HIS PLANS INTO MOTION
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GENTLEMEN, THE MOMENT YOU HAVE ALL BEEN WAITING FOR HAS COME AT LAST. THE TIME TO ATTACK THE WRETCHED INVADERS AND DRIVE THEM BACK! WITH THE SHU ARMY CAMPED ACROSS A DISTANCE OF OVER 800 LI, WE CAN ATTACK ALMOST ANYWHERE IN THEIR LINES WITH LITTLE WORRY. MOREOVER, AS IT HAS NOT RAINED AT ALL FOR THE PAST MONTH, THE SHU SOLDIERS WILL LIKELY HAVE BEEN ENERVATED A GREAT DEAL FROM THE SUMMER HEAT. THIS IS THE PERFECT CHANCE TO DESTROY THEM ALL IN ONE FELL SWOOP!

AHH, FINALLY WE CAN ATTACK!

THE WINDS WILL MAKE IT EASY TO RAZE THE SHU CAMPS.

ZHU RAN, LOAD YOUR SHIPS WITH FIREWOOD AND DRY GRASS AND SAIL ACROSS THE RIVER WHEN STRONG SOUTHEASTERLY WINDS BEGIN TO BLOW AROUND NOON TOMORROW.

HAN DANG, ONCE ZHU RAN SETS THE FIRST BASES ON FIRE, YOU WILL CROSS THE RIVER TO ATTACK THE NORTH SHORE.

ZHOU TAI, YOU WILL ATTACK THE SOUTHERN SHORE.

OHH!

ALL OTHER OFFICERS ARE TO STAND BY AND AWAIT MY FURTHER ORDERS DEPENDING ON HOW THE BATTLE DEVELOPS.

YES, SIR.

LIU BEI'S VERY LIFE IS ALREADY WITHIN OUR STRANGLEHOLD!

THE WU TROOPS WERE ENTHUSED AT A CHANCE TO FINALLY GO ON THE ATTACK

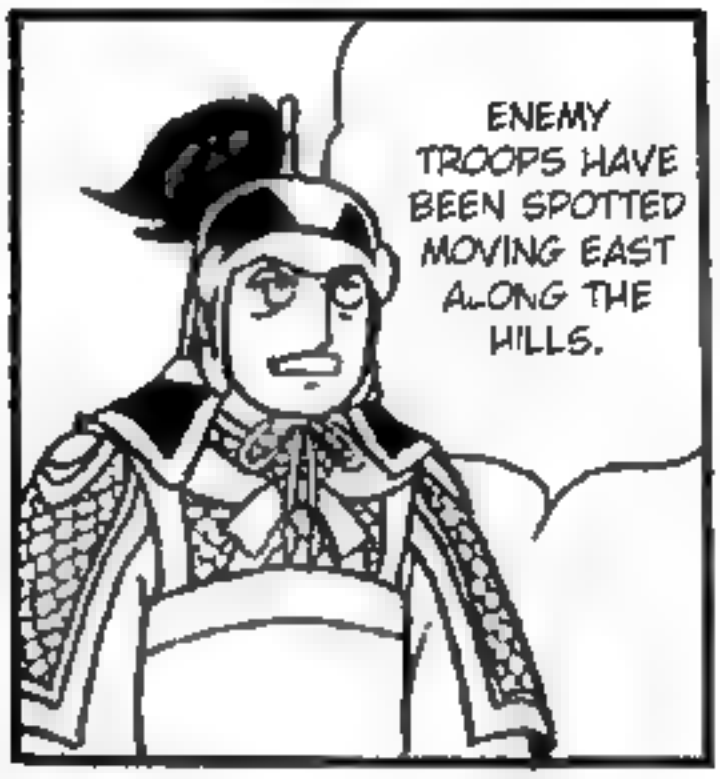
TRUE TO LU XUN'S PREDICTIONS, SOUTHEASTERLY WINDS BEGAN TO BLOW THE NEXT DAY

OH?

YOUR MAJESTY, MANY WU SHIPS HAVE BEEN SEEN MASSED AT ONE PLACE IN THE RIVER, BUT THEY SHOW NO SIGN OF SAILING FORTH FOR THE TIME BEING.

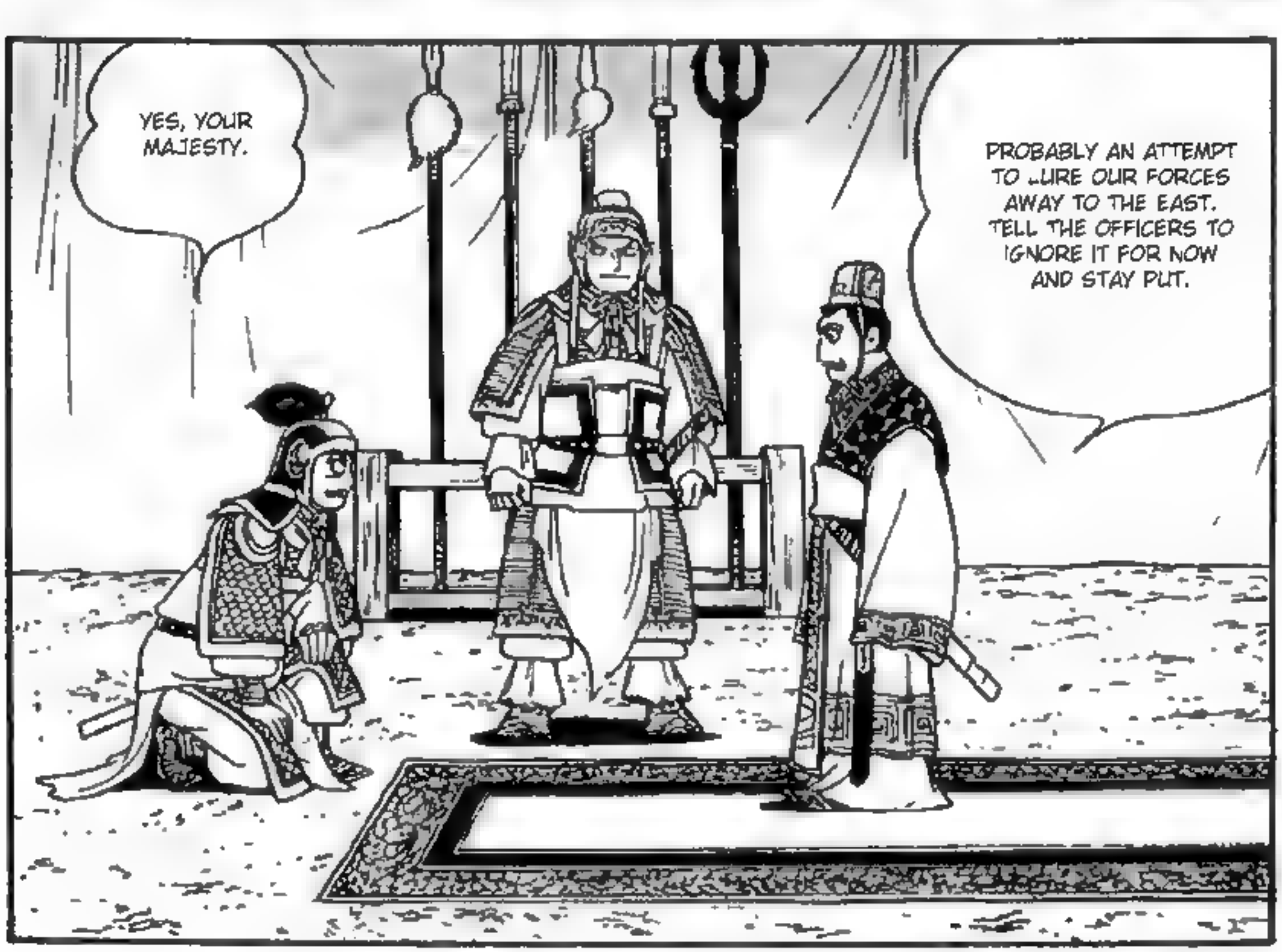
YES, SIR.

PROBABLY A BAIT OF SOME KIND. TELL THE OFFICERS NOT TO APPROACH THE SHIPS.


ENEMY TROOPS HAVE BEEN SPOTTED MOVING EAST ALONG THE HILLS.

I BRING A REPORT!

HM...


YES, YOUR MAJESTY.
PROBABLY AN ATTEMPT TO LURE OUR FORCES AWAY TO THE EAST. TELL THE OFFICERS TO IGNORE IT FOR NOW AND STAY PUT.

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ADVANCE!

WITH WINDS LIKE THESE, SHU CAMPS WILL BE BURNT TO A CRISP IN AN INSTANT!

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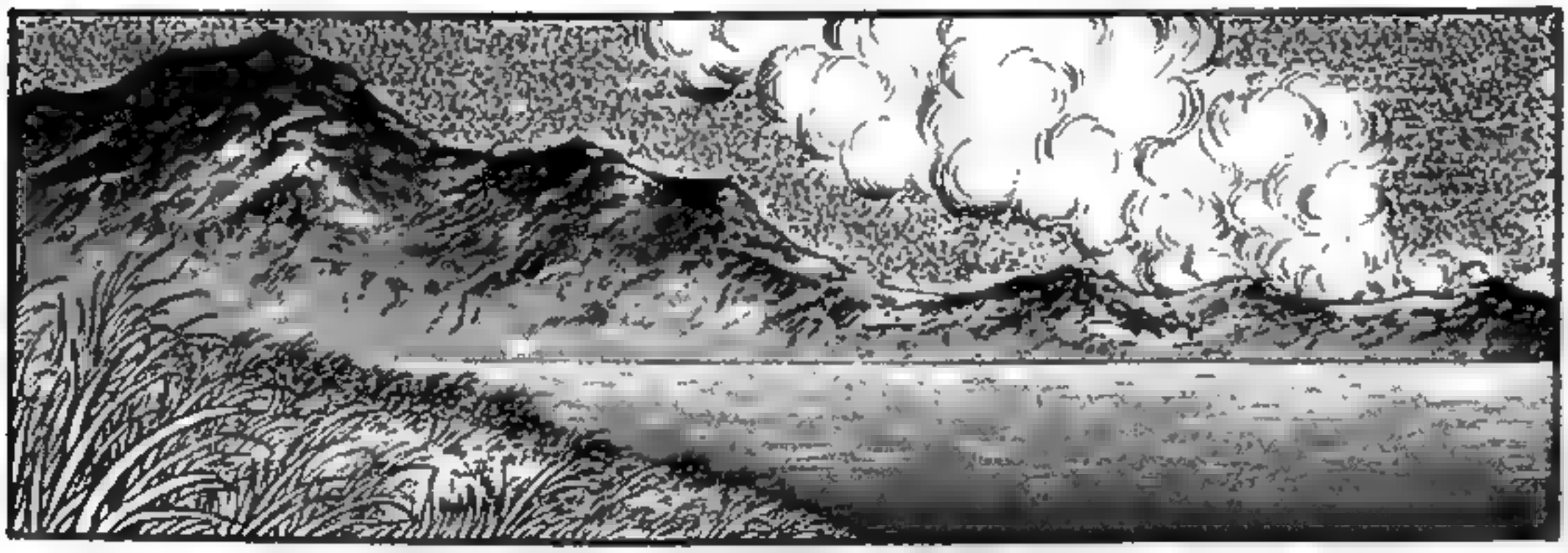
WHAT!?
FIRE HAS BEEN SPOTTED IN OUR CAMPS ALONG THE NORTHERN BANK.

AH!



TO THE NORTH BANK!

YES, YOUR MAJESTY.

GUAN XING, GO AND SEE IF THE FIRE IS ACCIDENTAL OR AN ENEMY ATTACK.

SIR, I SEE SMOKE RISING FROM THE SOUTHERN BANK AS WELL!

HM!?

YES.
...
THIS DOES NOT BODE WELL... ZHANG BAO, GO CHECK UP ON THEIR STATUS.

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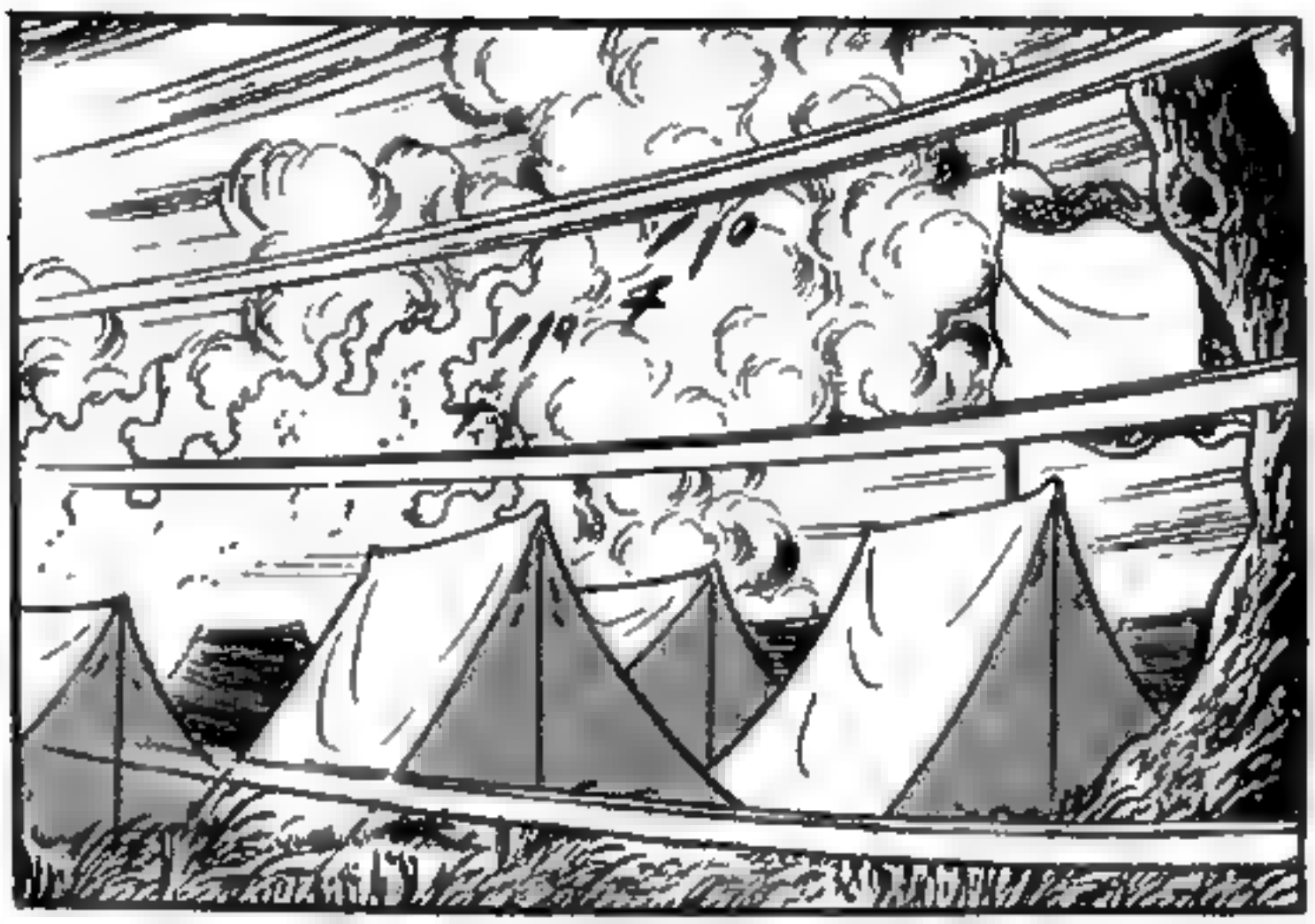
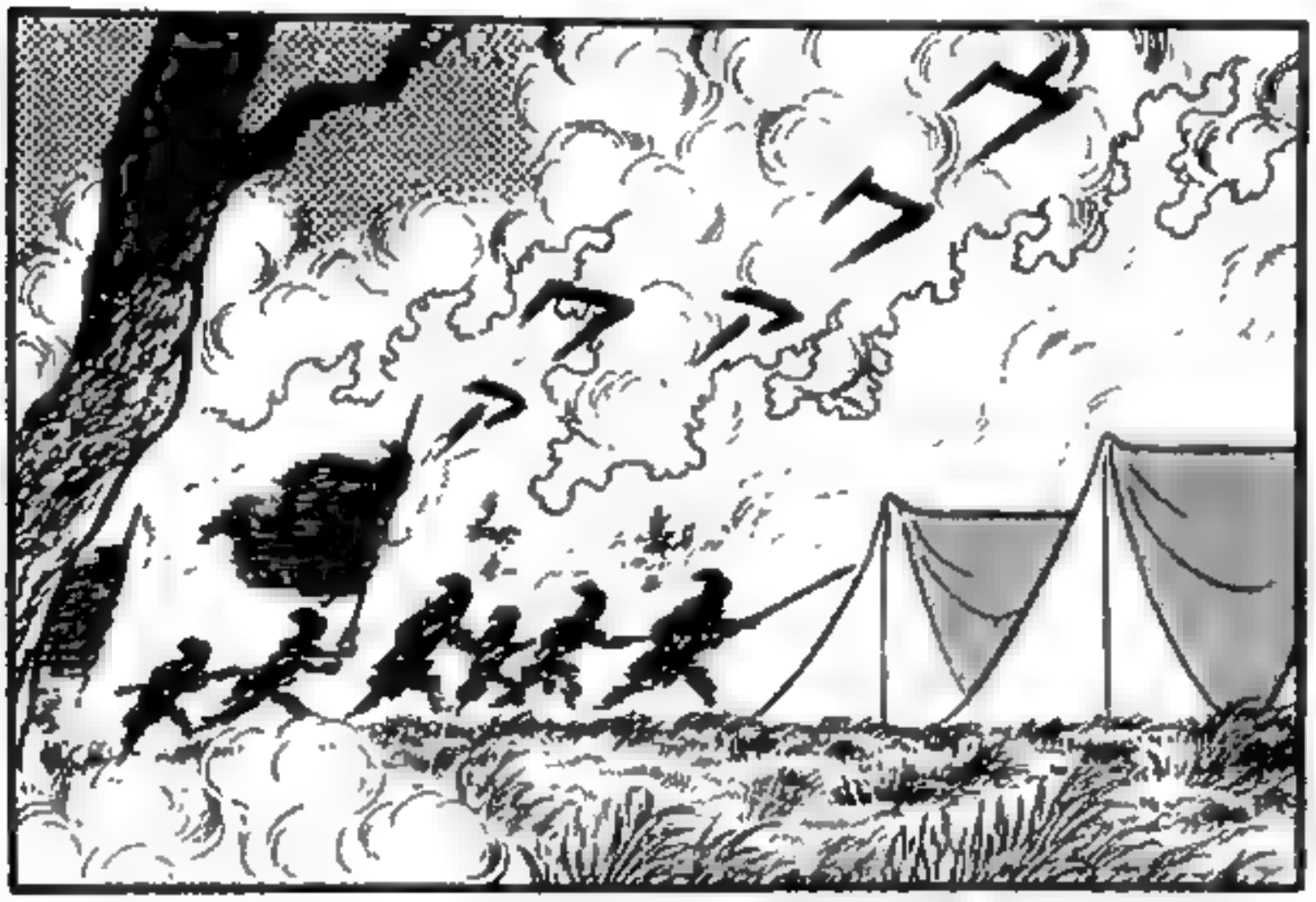
HM?

GIVEN THE LACK OF RAINFALL THIS PAST MONTH, THE FIRE IS SURE TO SPREAD QUICKLY. THIS IS NOT GOOD...



THERE'S FIRE HERE TOO!?

YOUR MAJESTY, OVER TO YOUR RIGHT!

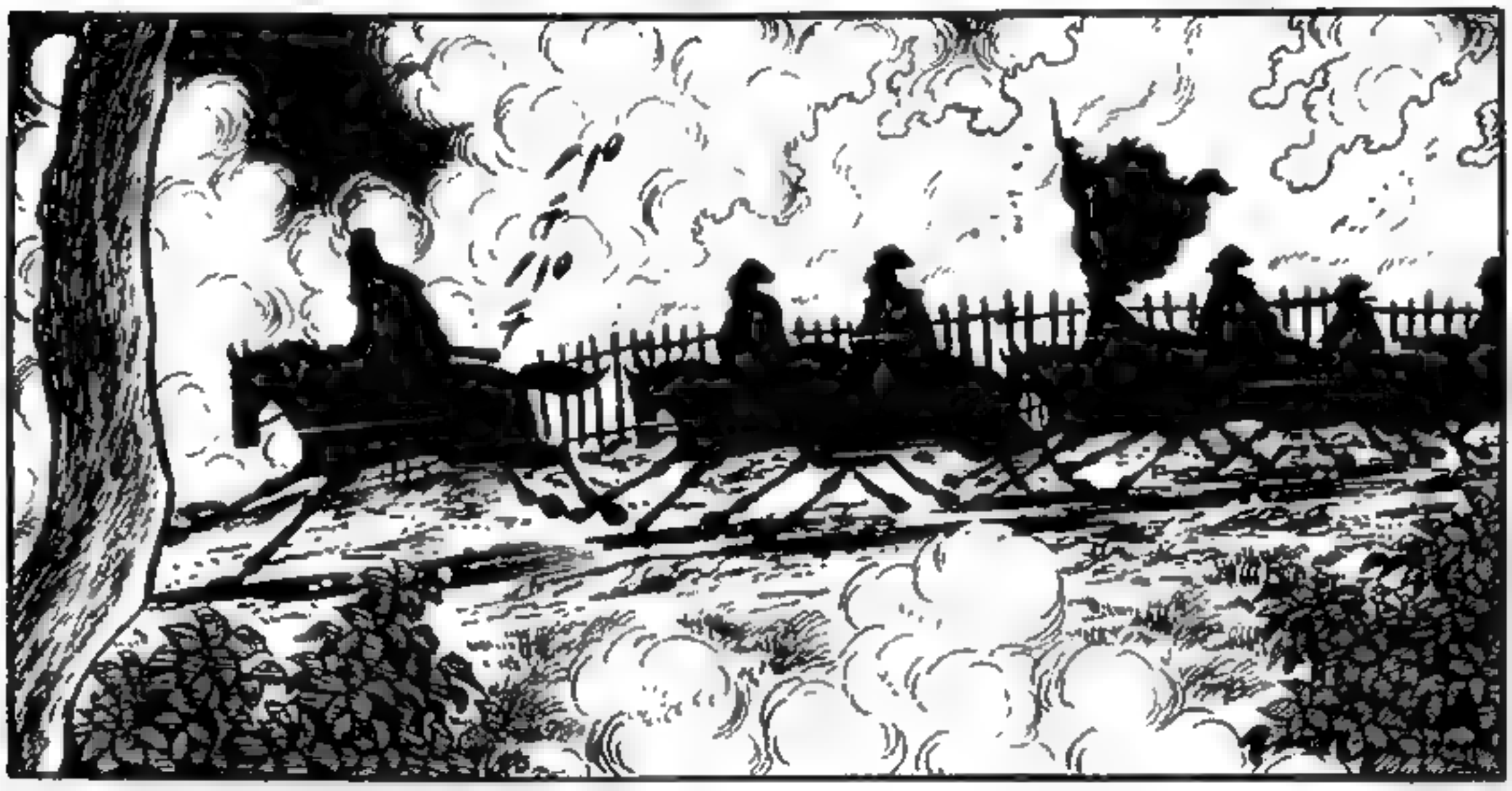


THIS IS MOST DEFINITELY AN ENEMY ATTACK BY FIRE!

AFTER HOLING THEMSELVES UP FOR SO LONG, THEY'VE NOW CREPT ALL THE WAY TO MY CAMPS ALL OF A SUDDEN!?

WHAT, HERE!?
WU TROOPS!

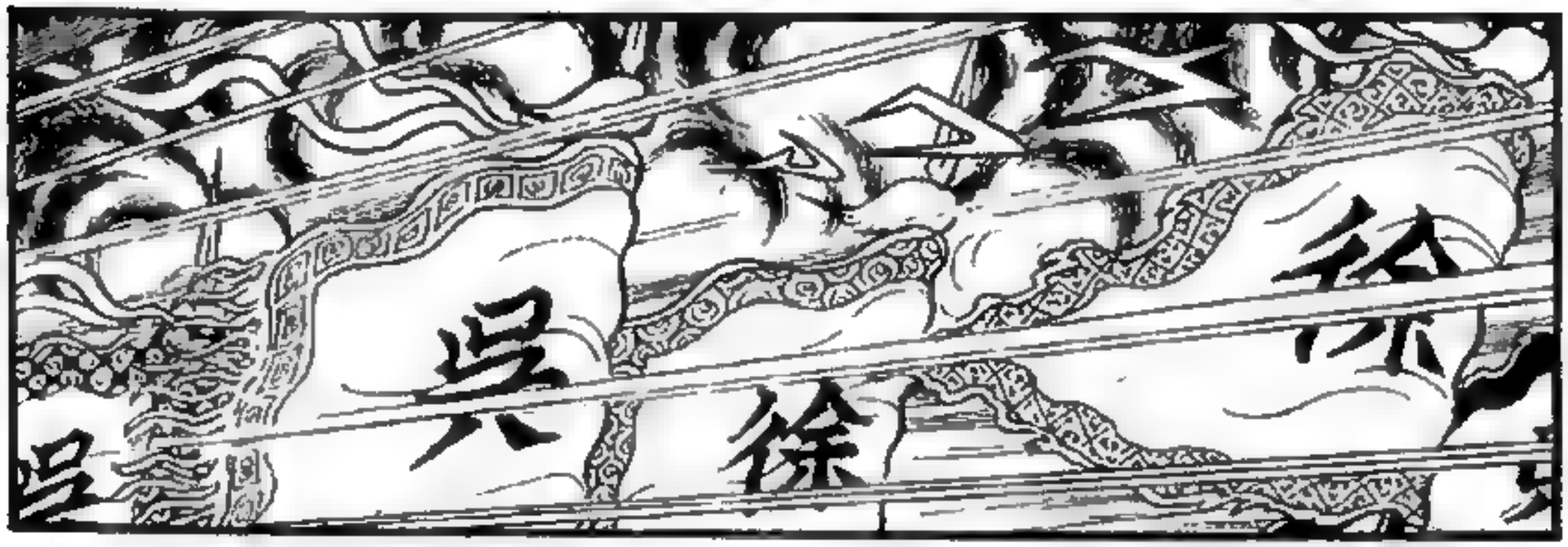
FINE
IT IS TOO DANGEROUS FOR YOUR MAJESTY TO STAY HERE! YOU MUST RETREAT TO FENG XI'S CAMP WHILE WE HOLD OFF THE ENEMIES HERE!



AH!

T-THAT BANNER!

EVEN FENG X!'S CAMP IS ABLAZE!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I DON'T HAVE ANY OTHER CHOICE, DO I

PLEASE RETREAT ALL THE WAY TO BAIDICHENG, YOUR MAJESTY!
IT'S XU SHENG OF WU!

RETREAT TO BAIDICHENG!
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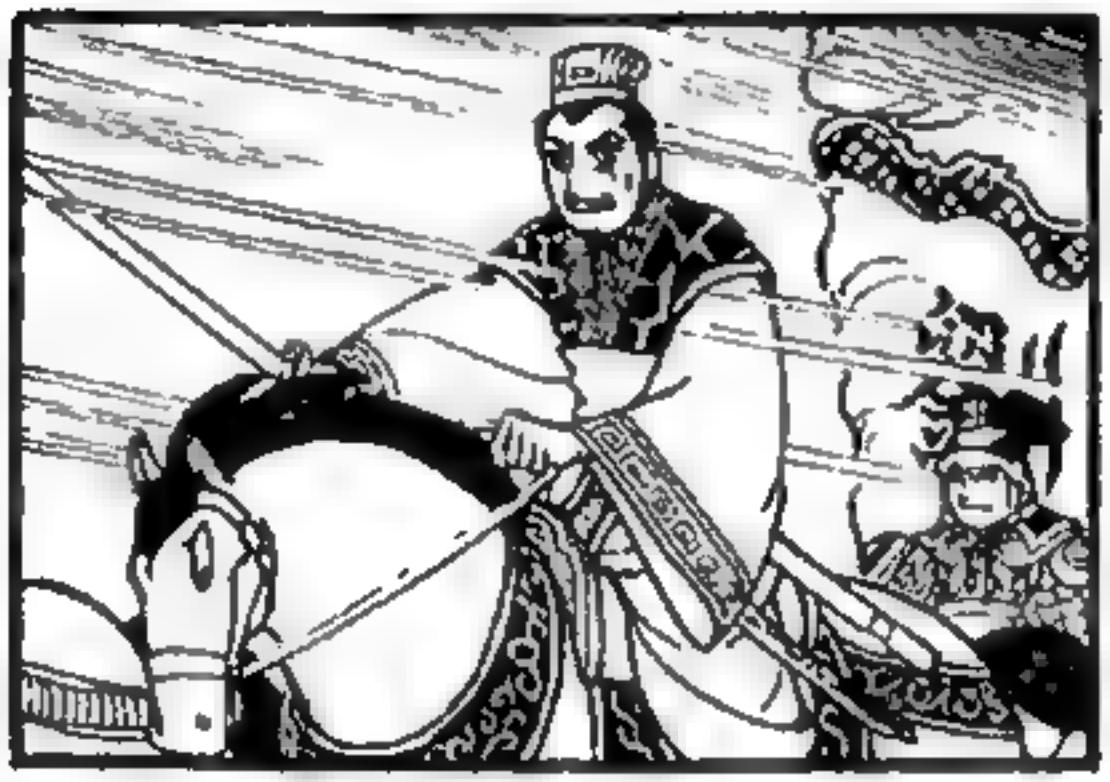
AHH!

DING FENG!? WHAT'S HE DOING ALL THE WAY HERE!?

TAKE HIM ALIVE, MEN!

WELL, IF IT ISN'T LIU BEI HIMSELF!



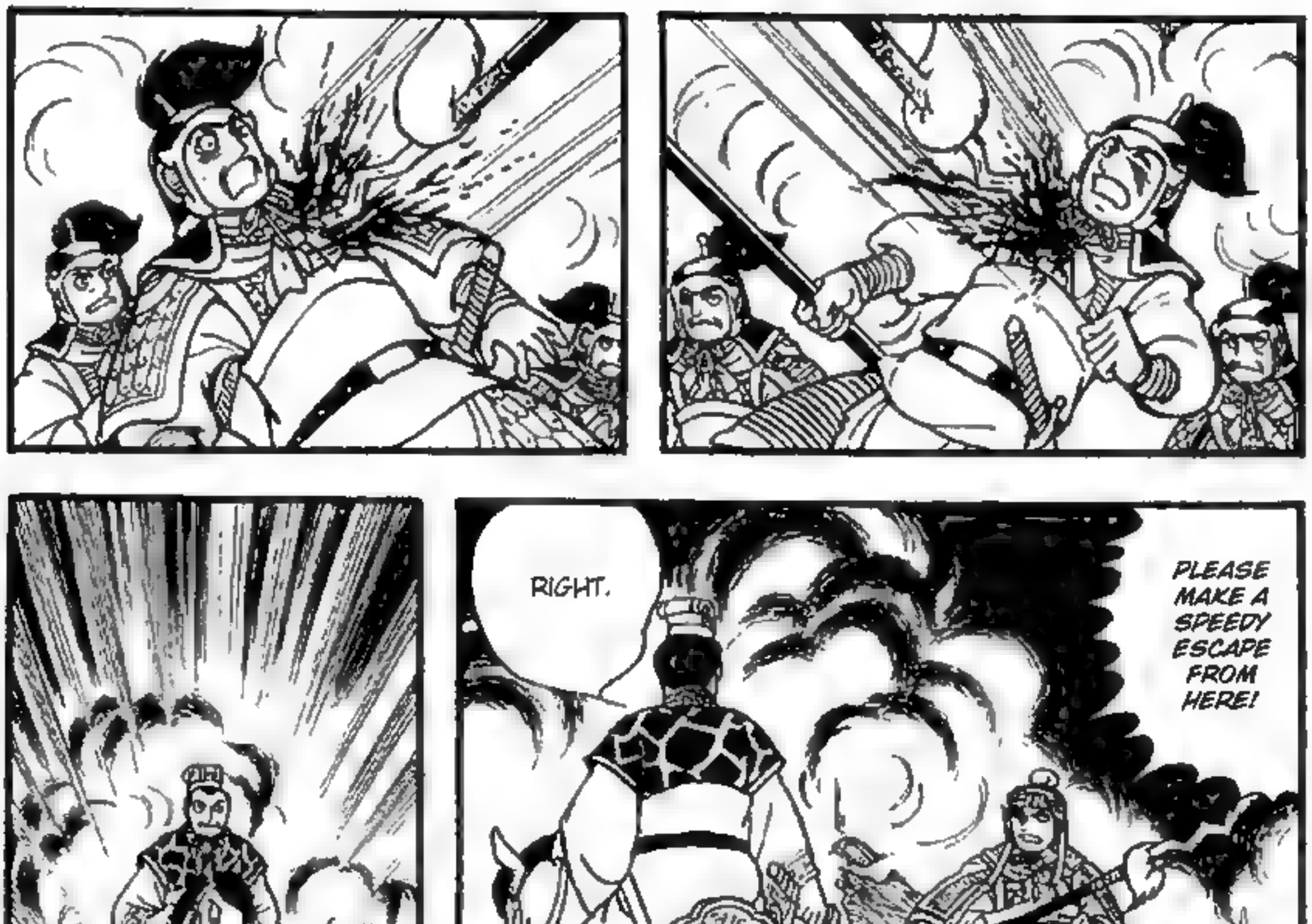
I MUST FIGHT MY WAY OUT SOMEHOW...
NGHH...

MORE ENEMY TROOPS?

YOUR MAJESTY!

ZHANG BAO!

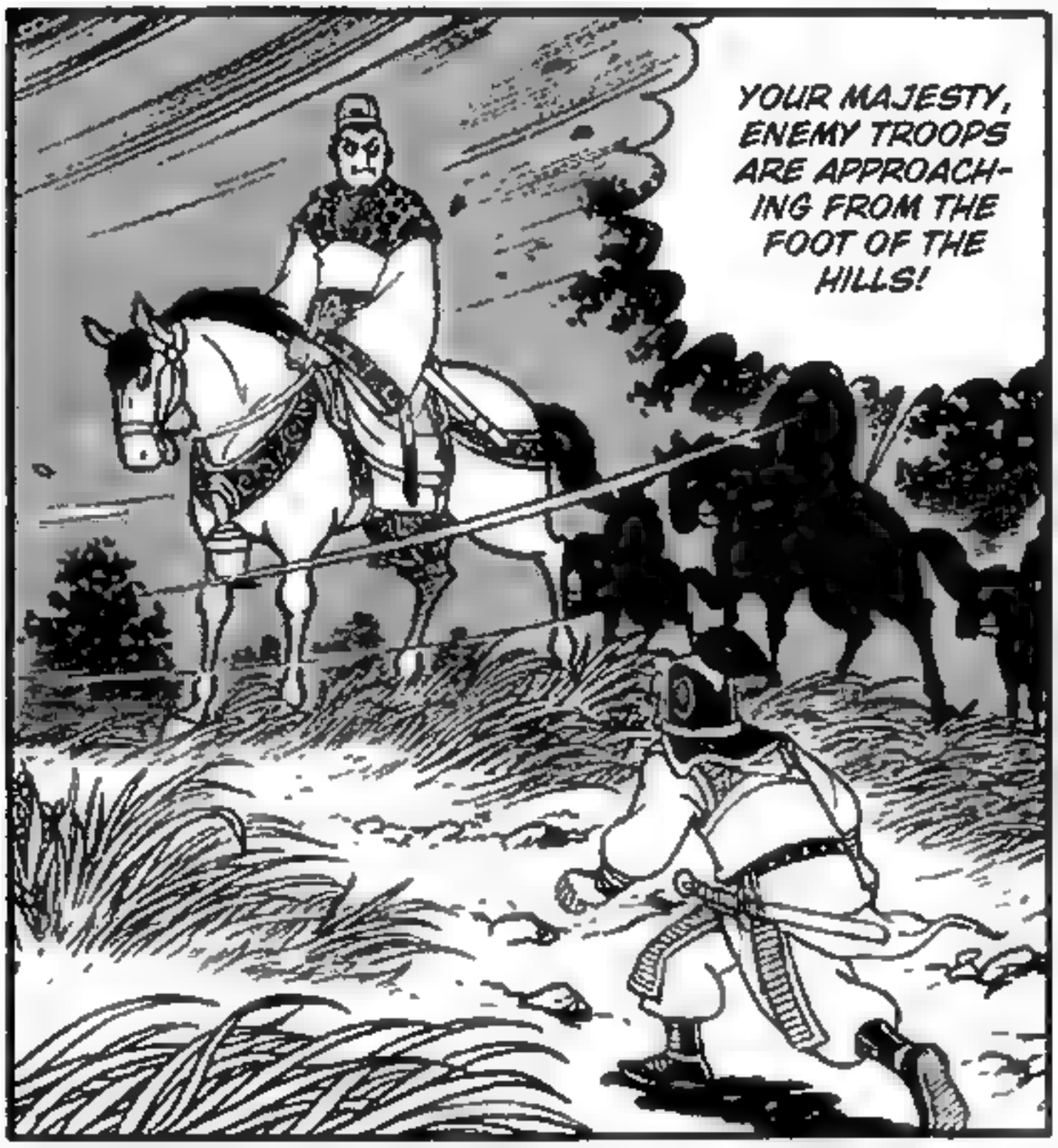
I WILL DEAL WITH THE ENEMIES HERE!


RIGHT.
PLEASE MAKE A SPEEDY ESCAPE FROM HERE!

AGHHH!

A DRY MONTH WITHOUT RAIN AND STRONG SOUTHEASTERLY WINDS...
S-SO THIS WAS WHAT LU XUN WAS AIMING FOR ALL ALONG...

MY CAMPS... ENGULFED BY A SEA OF FLAMES...


YOUR MAJESTY, ENEMY TROOPS ARE APPROACH-ING FROM THE FOOT OF THE HILLS!

A FEARSOME ATTACK BY FIRE...

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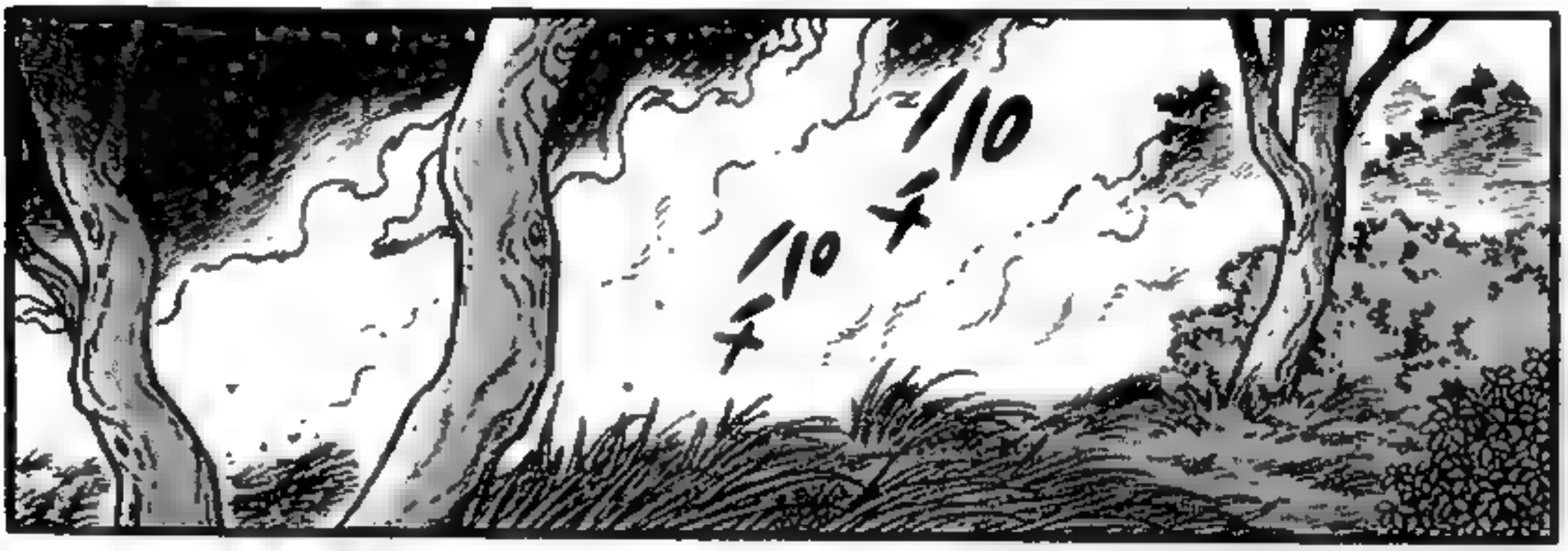
LIU BEI IS ON TOP OF THAT HILL! SET IT ON FIRE!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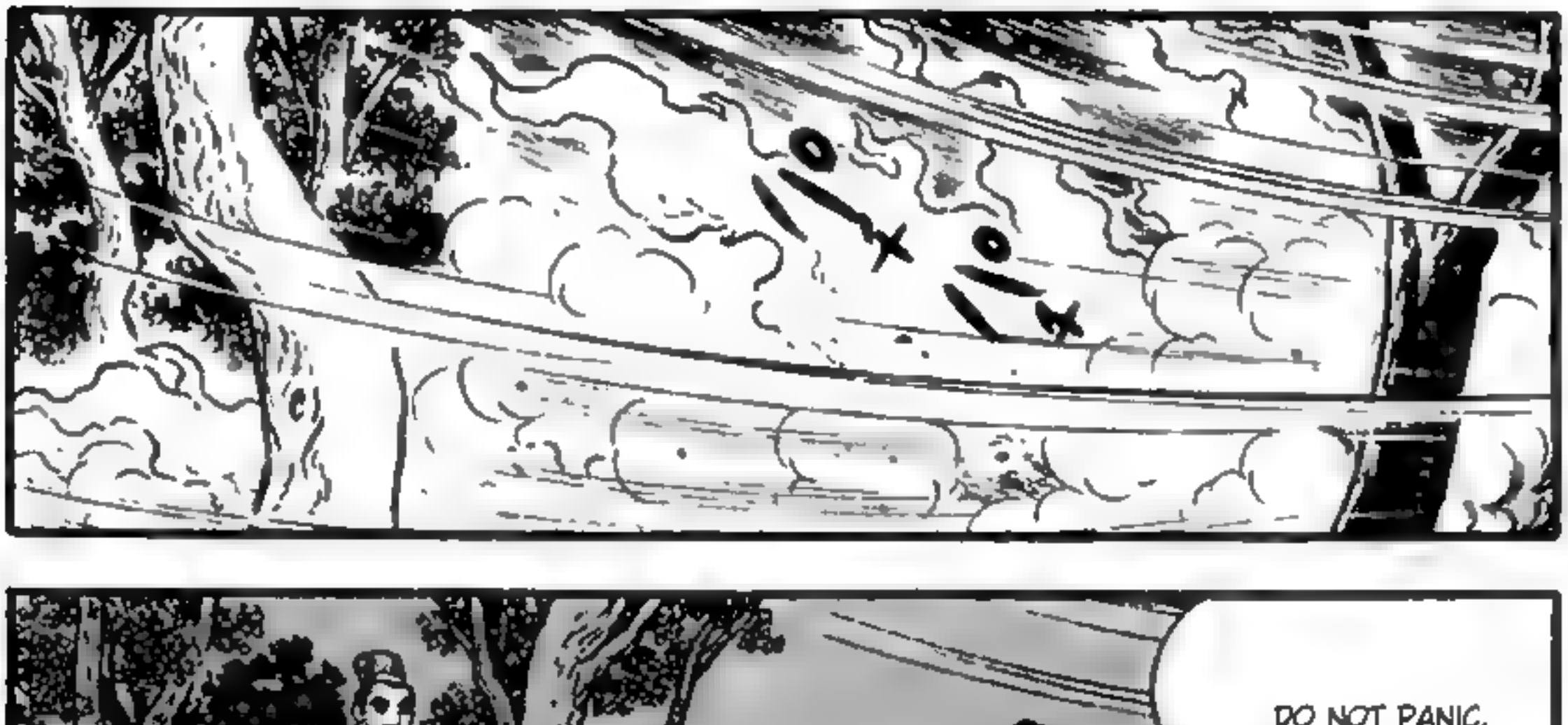
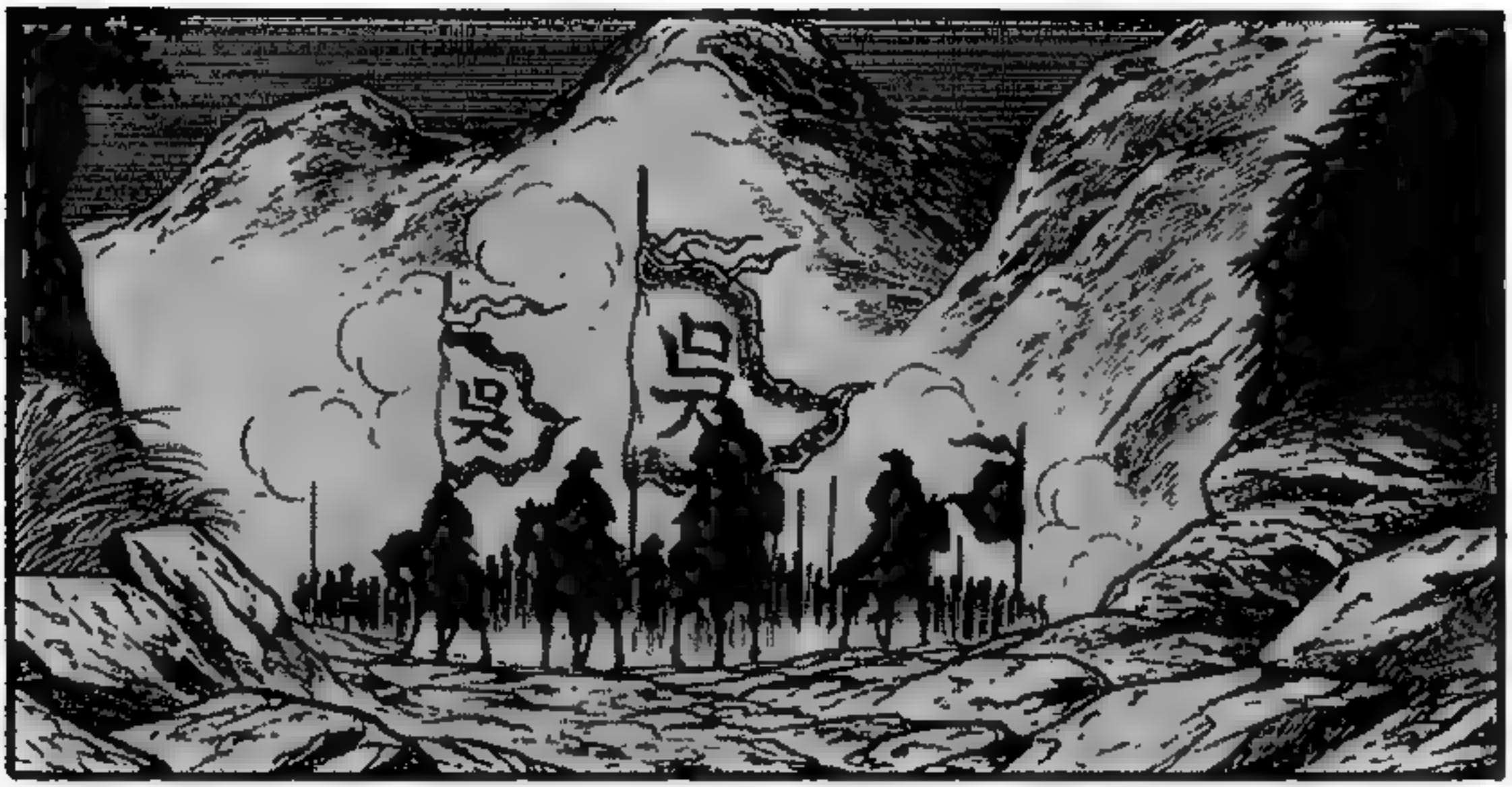
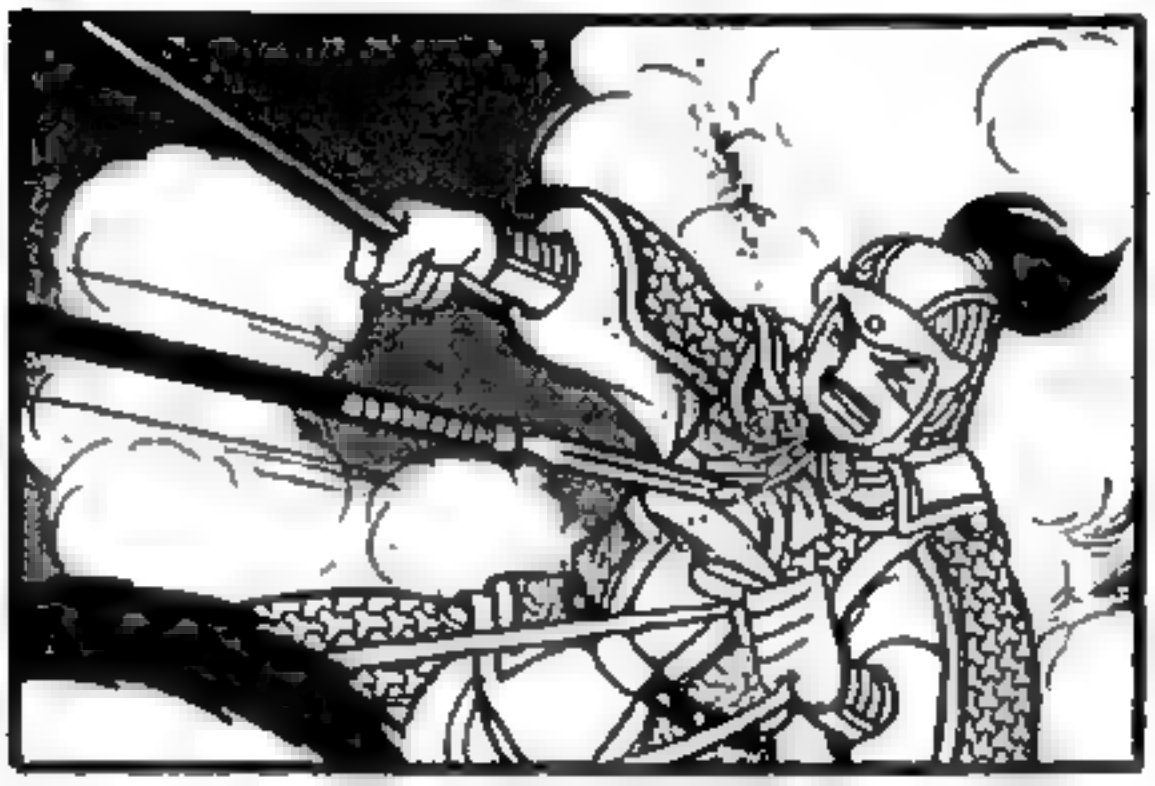
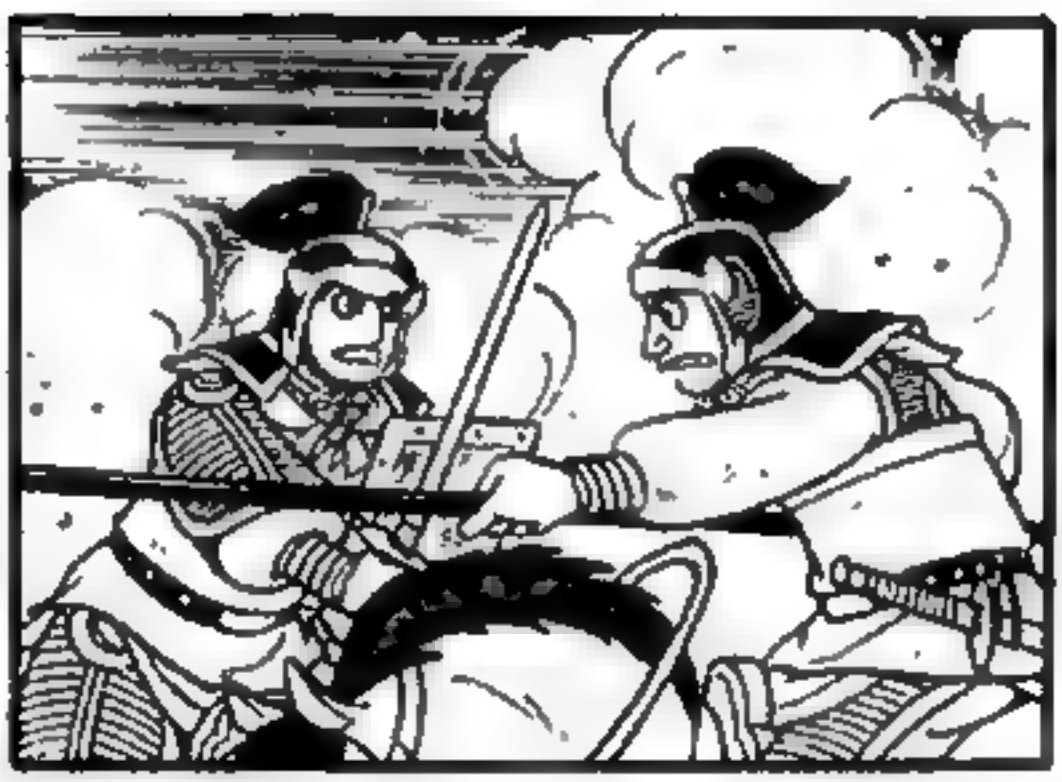


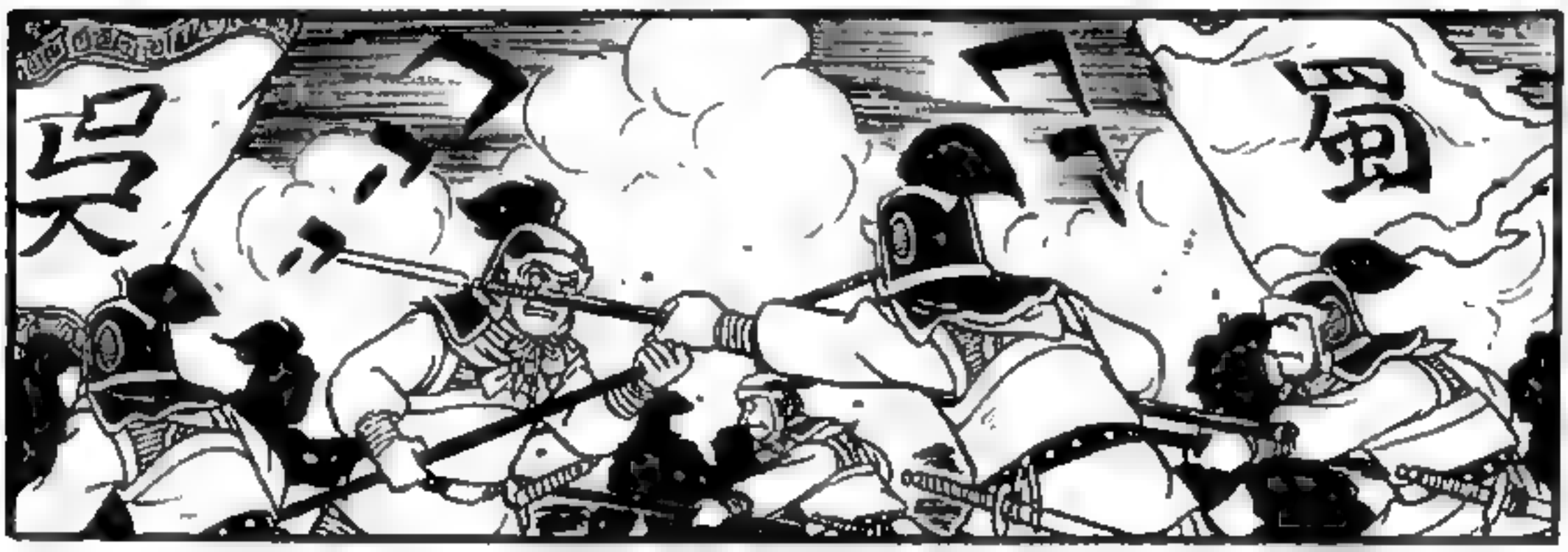
DO NOT PANIC, YOUR MAJESTY. THIS WAY IS STILL NOT ON FIRE.

WE MUST ESCAPE BEFORE THIS PATH IS ON FIRE AS WELL.


FEAR NOT, WE WILL HOLD THEM OFF HERE.
THE ENEMIES WERE HIDING HERE AS WELL!?
AHHH!



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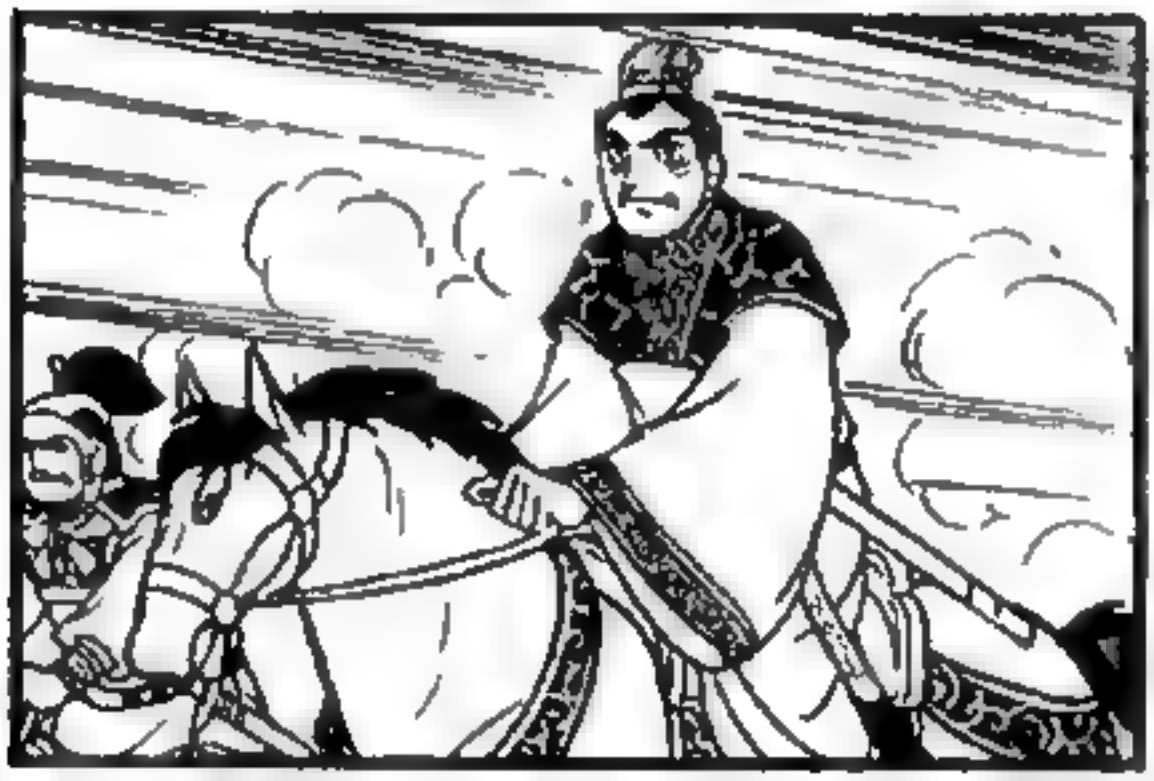

PLEASE ESCAPE WHILE YOUR MEN HOLD THEM OFF!
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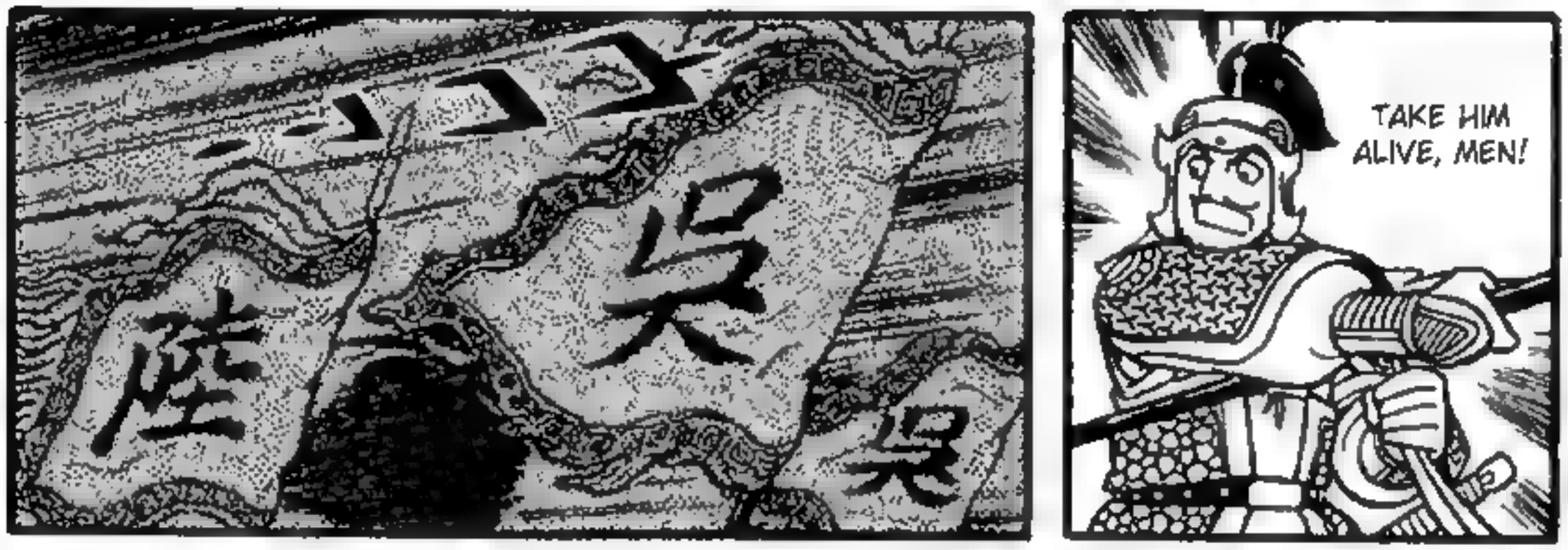
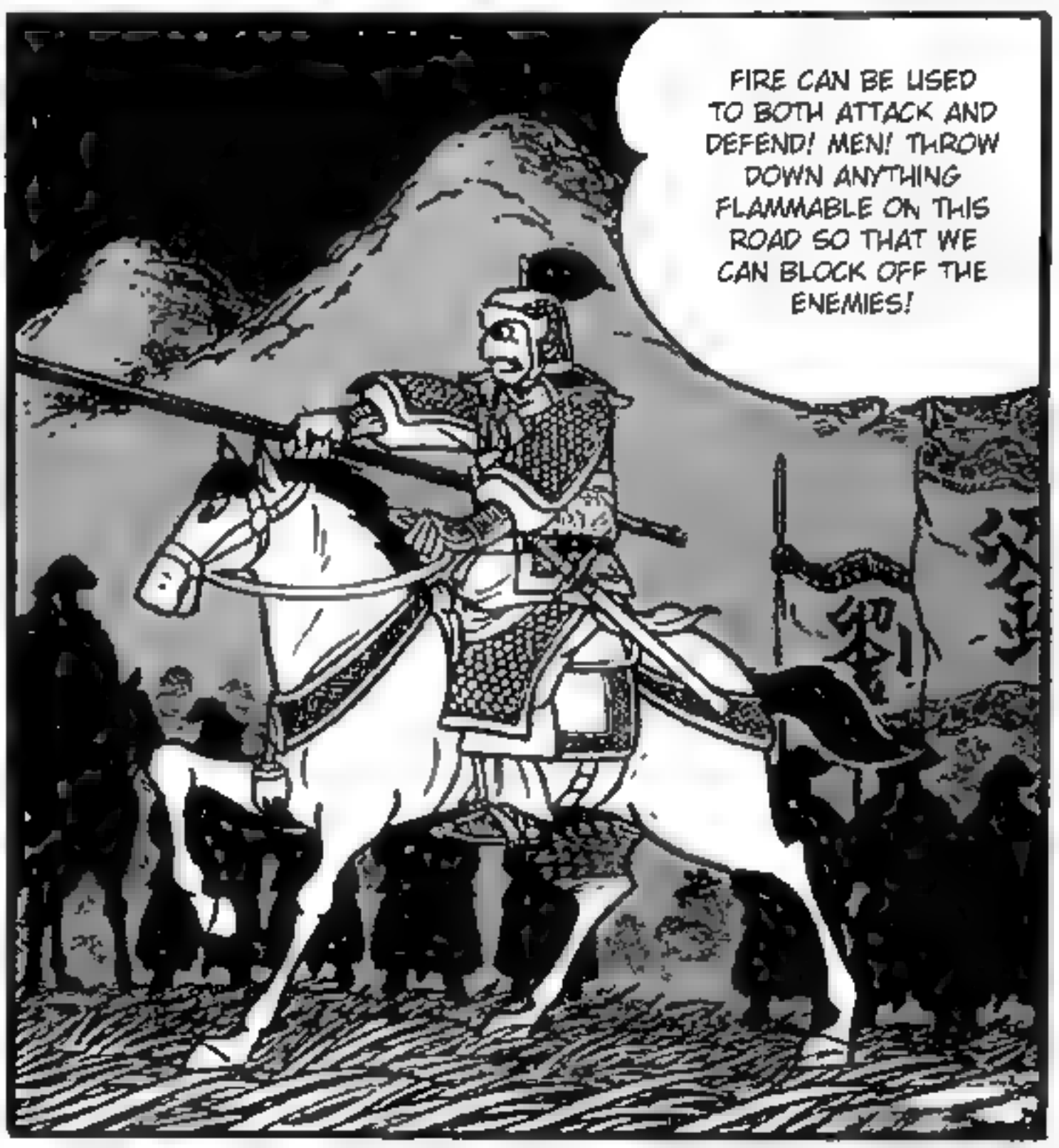
AHH!

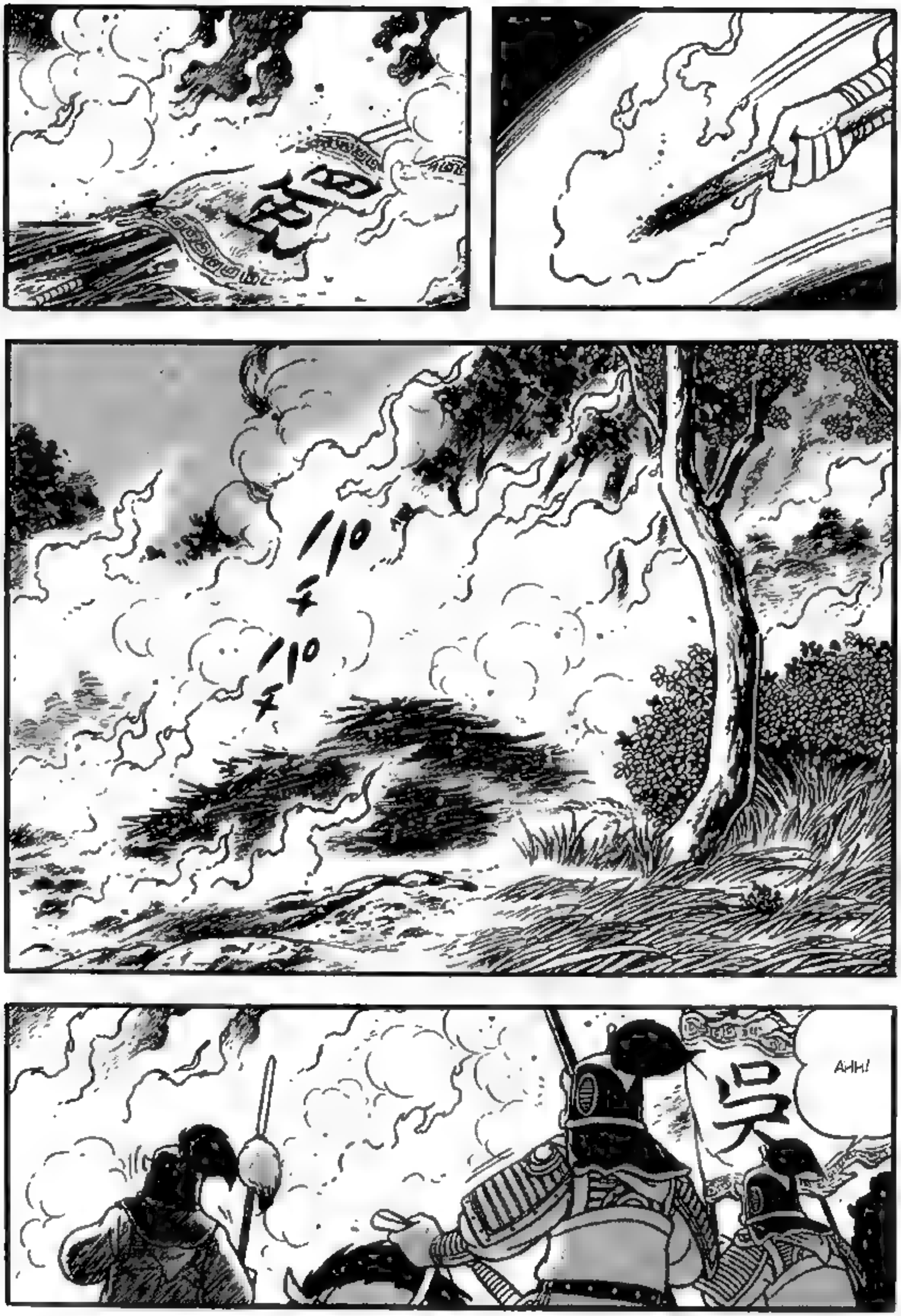
SURRENDER, LIU BEI! THERE IS NOWHERE TO RUN NOW!


TAKE HIM ALIVE, MEN!

DO NOT LOSE HOPE JUST YET, YOUR MAJESTY!

ALAS, MY END HAS COME...


FIRE CAN BE USED TO BOTH ATTACK AND DEFEND! MEN! THROW DOWN ANYTHING FLAMMABLE ON THIS ROAD SO THAT WE CAN BLOCK OFF THE ENEMIES!


AHH!

THIS WAY, YOUR MAJESTY!

AHH!

AGHHH!

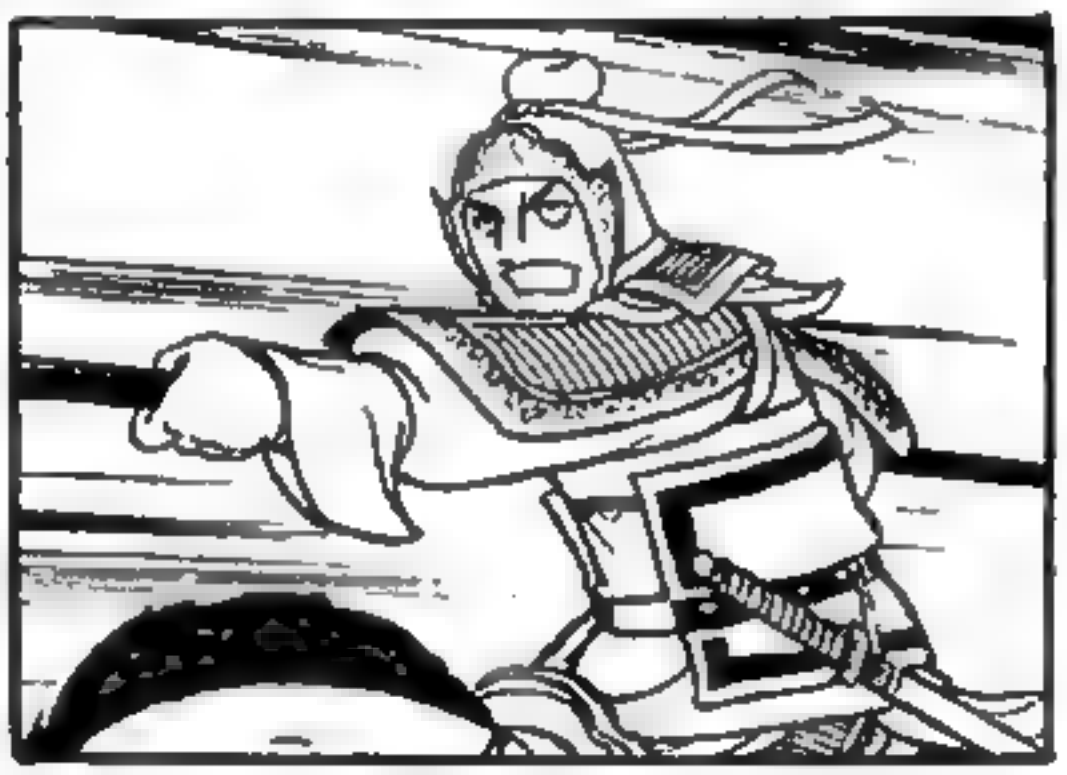
I WILL PROUDLY ACCOMPANY YOUR MAJESTY TO THE AFTER-LIFE.

LET US AT LEAST DIE HONOURABLY HERE.

TO THINK THE ENEMIES WOULD BE HERE AS WELL... WE ARE TRULY DONE FOR NOW.

ATTACK!

吳
吳



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HUH?

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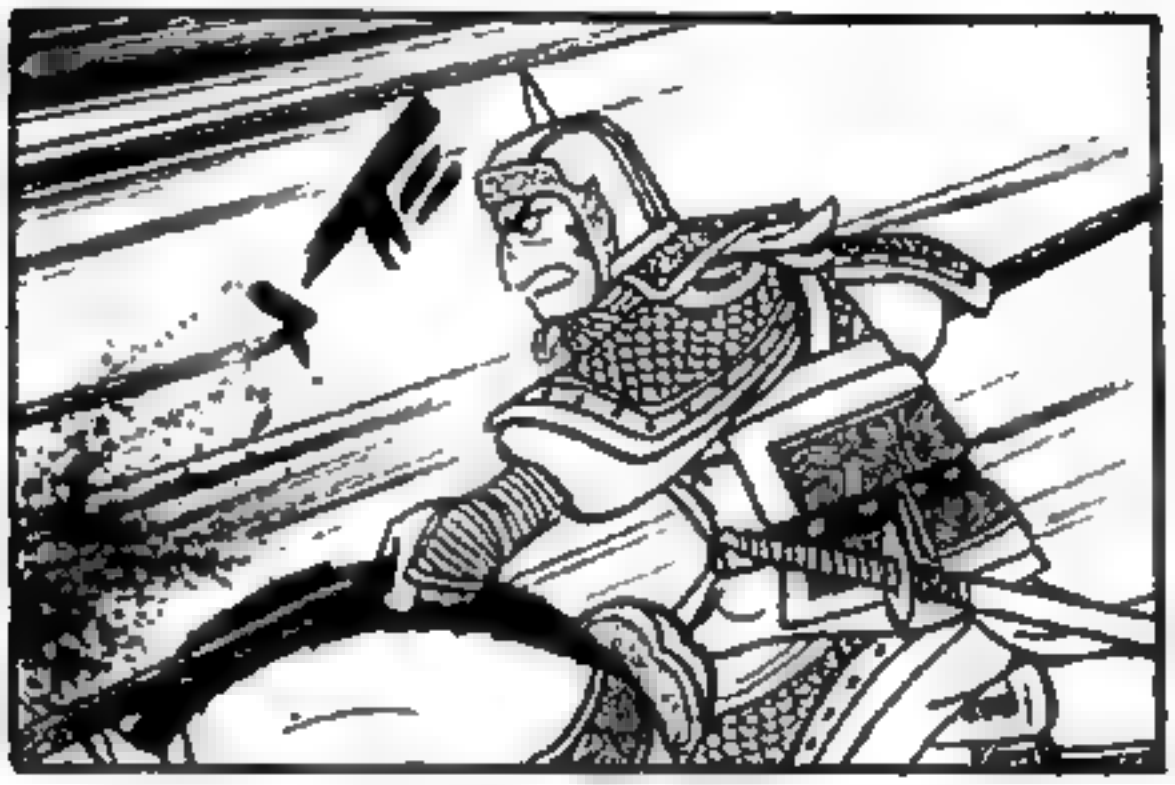

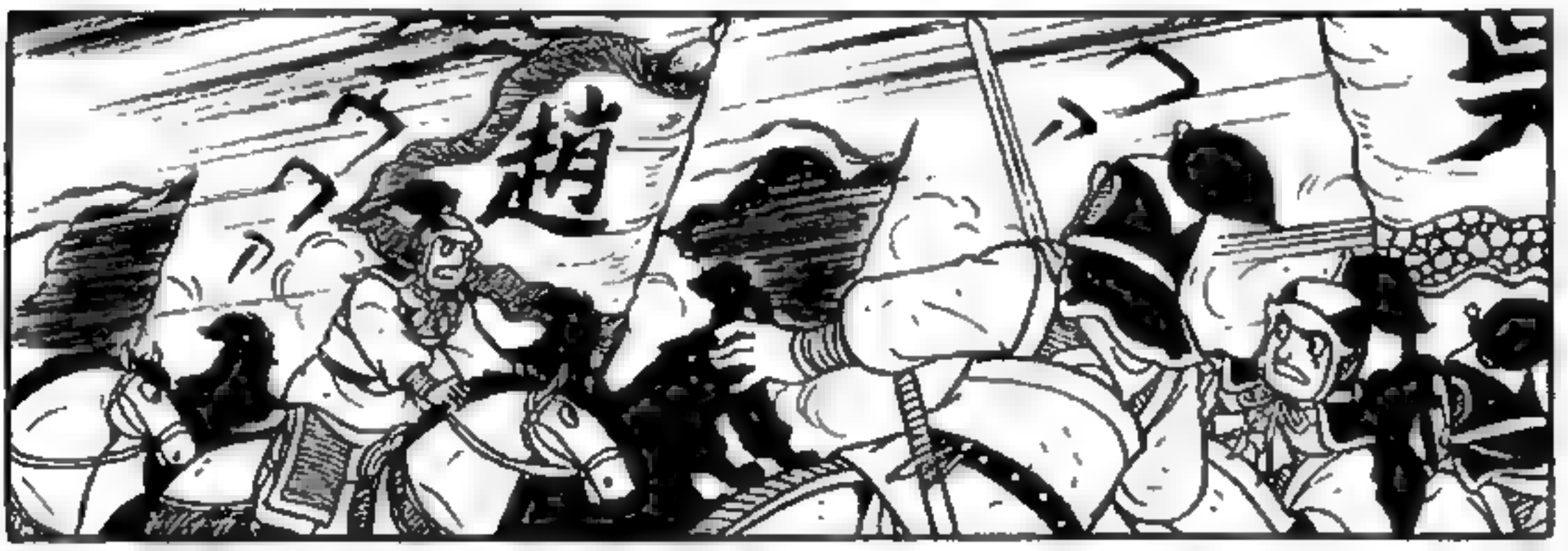
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WHAT ARE YOU DOING ALL THE WAY HERE?

I RECEIVED AN ORDER FROM KONGMING TO HEAD OVER HERE AT ONCE.

ZHAO ZILONG!
IS YOUR MAJESTY UNINJURED!?

SURROUNDED BY FLAMES AND WU TROOPS, LIU BEI'S DEATH WAS ALL BUT ASSURED IF NOT FOR ZHAO ZILONG'S TIMELY ARRIVAL.

ALTHOUGH LIU BEI HIMSELF WAS SAVED.
HIS CAMPS WERE LIKE ISLANDS SINKING INTO A SEA OF FIRE
THE DISPERSED SHU FORCES WERE UNABLE TO REGROUP AND PICKED OFF INDIVIDUALLY
COUNTLESS OF SHU OFFICERS WERE KILLED IN THE ENSUING SLAUGHTER SO BLOODY THAT ONE COULD NOT BEAR TO LOOK UPON IT WITH BOTH EYES OPEN

THE WU ARMY,
BUOYED BY THE
GRAND VICTORY,
NOW MARCHED FOR
BAIDICHENG TO
ENSNARE LIU BEI
陸

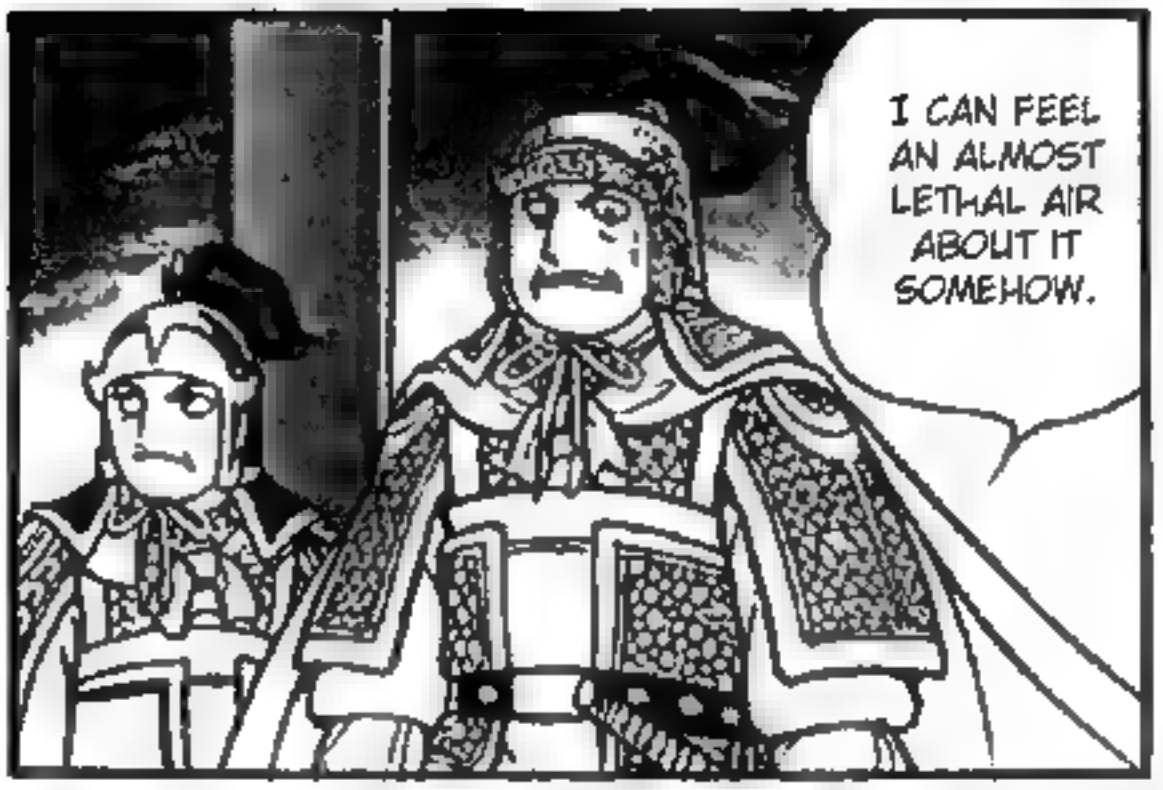
MAZE OF STONE SENTINELS IN 8 ARRAYS

FOR STRONGLY OPPOSING YOUR COMMAND AT EVERY TURN, NOT KNOWING YOU HAD A STRATEGY SO FAR-SIGHTED.

FOR WHAT?
I WOULD LIKE TO APOLOGIZE, COMMANDER.

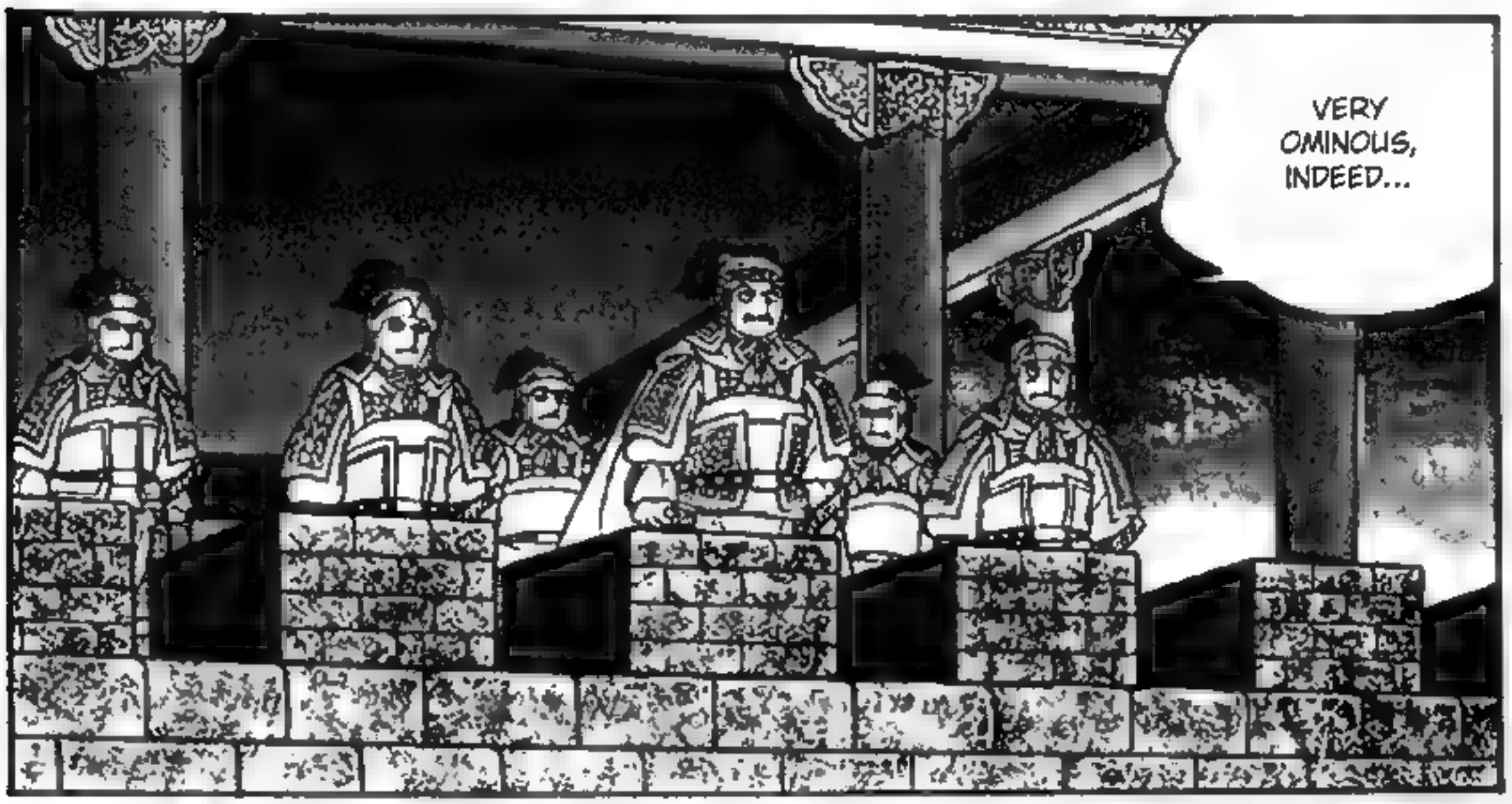
MORE IMPORTANTLY, I'M GETTING AN OMINOUS FEELING ABOUT THAT AREA OVER THERE.

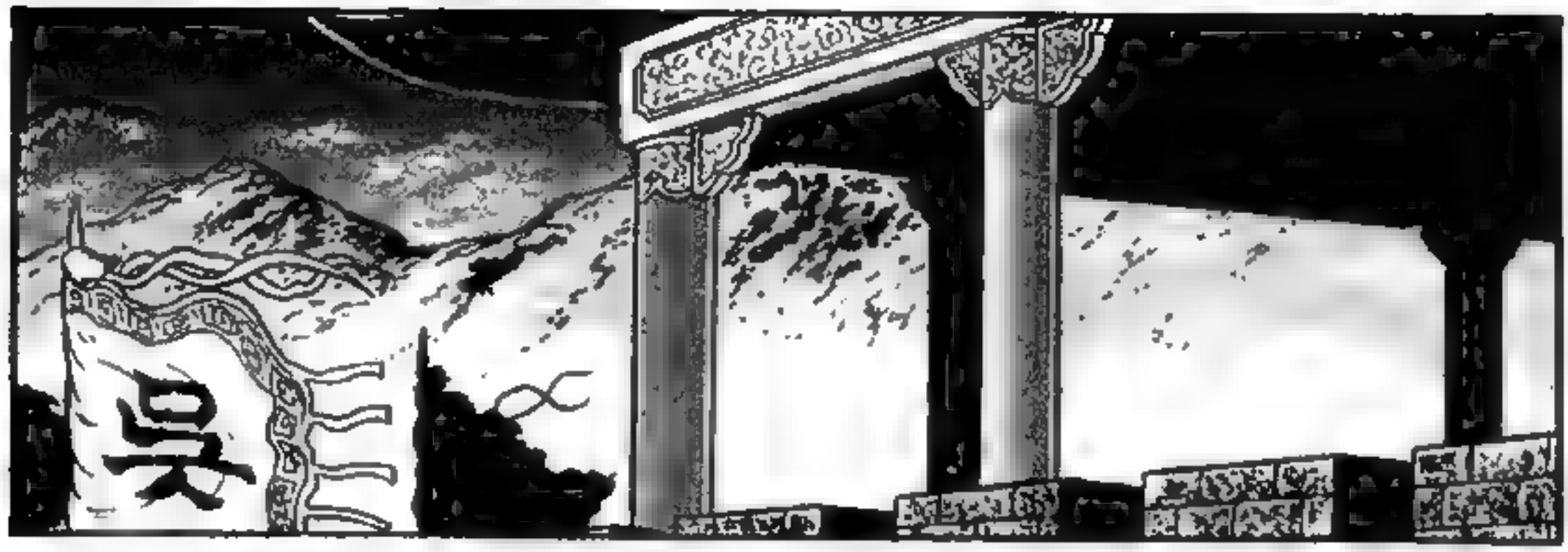
HA, THAT'S ALL FAR IN THE PAST NOW. I'M SIMPLY MORE THAN GRATEFUL THAT ALL YOU GENERALS PERFORMED SPLENDIDLY WHEN THE TIME CAME.


I CAN FEEL AN ALMOST LETHAL AIR ABOUT IT SOMEHOW.

THAT AREA IS CALLED FISH-BELLY BUT WHAT OF IT, COMMANDER?

YES, SIR.
SEND SCOUTS TO CHECK THE AREA. I FEAR THERE MAY BE AN ENEMY AMBUSH THERE.

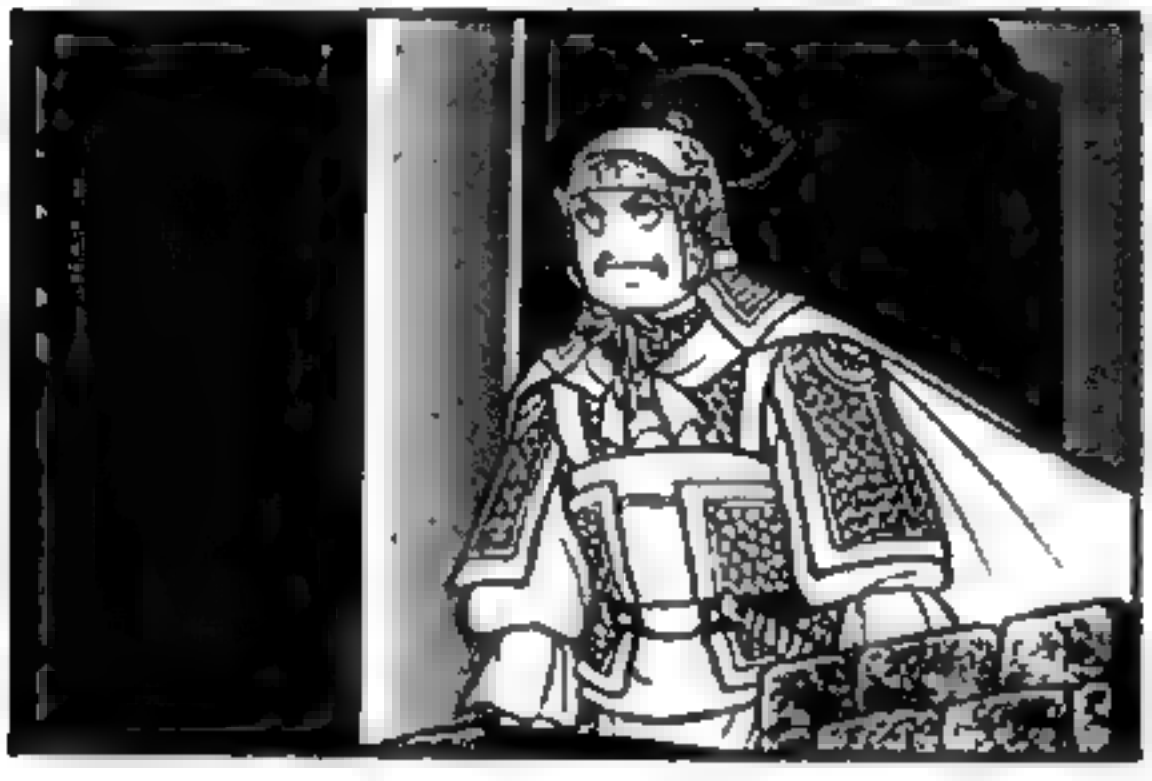

VERY OMINOUS, INDEED...



HMM... AM I SIMPLY BEING PARA-NOID?

NOT A SINGLE ONE, COM-MANDER.
THERE WERE NO ENEMIES!?

MAYBE I SHOULD TAKE A CLOSER LOOK.



I WANT ANOTHER SCOUT SENT ONCE MORE.

NO, THERE'S DEFINITELY SOME SORT OF EERIE MIASMA COMING UP FROM THERE.

YES, SIR!
SEND ONLY OUR MOST EXPERIENCED SCOUTS!

WHAT SORT OF AMBUSH OR TRAP COULD BE PREPARED THERE...?

THE OMINOUS AIR SEEMS EVEN STRONGER AT NIGHT THAN DURING THE DAY..

GOOD, BRING HIM HERE AT ONCE.

OUR SCOUT HAS RETURNED, COMMANDER.

I HAVE JUST RETURNED FROM F SH-BELLY MEADOW, COMMANDER.

NO, I SCOURED THE AREA BUT I COULD NOT SEE ANY SIGNS OF SOLDIERS.

DID YOU SEE ANY ENEMY SOLDIERS?

ROCK PILES...?

HOWEVER, I DID FIND PILES AND PILES OF IRREGULARLY SIZED ROCKS ALONGSIDE THE RIVERSHORE. CURIOUSLY ENOUGH, I FELT A VERY EERIE ATMOSPHERE ABOUT THE PLACE.

NOBODY!?

I SEE. WELL, GOOD WORK.
YES, SIR.
THIS IS BECOMING ODDER AND ODDER...
FOR WHAT PURPOSE WERE THOSE ROCKS PILED UP FOR?

?

HM?

HELLO THERE.

LAST YEAR, A MAN NAMED ZHUGE LIANG CAME WITH TROOPS TO MAKE THOSE ROCK PILES.

OHH, THOSE ROCKS?

MIGHT YOU LOCALS KNOW OF ODDLY PILED ROCKS IN THIS AREA?

KONG-MING!?

A DEVICE OF KONGMING, HMM...

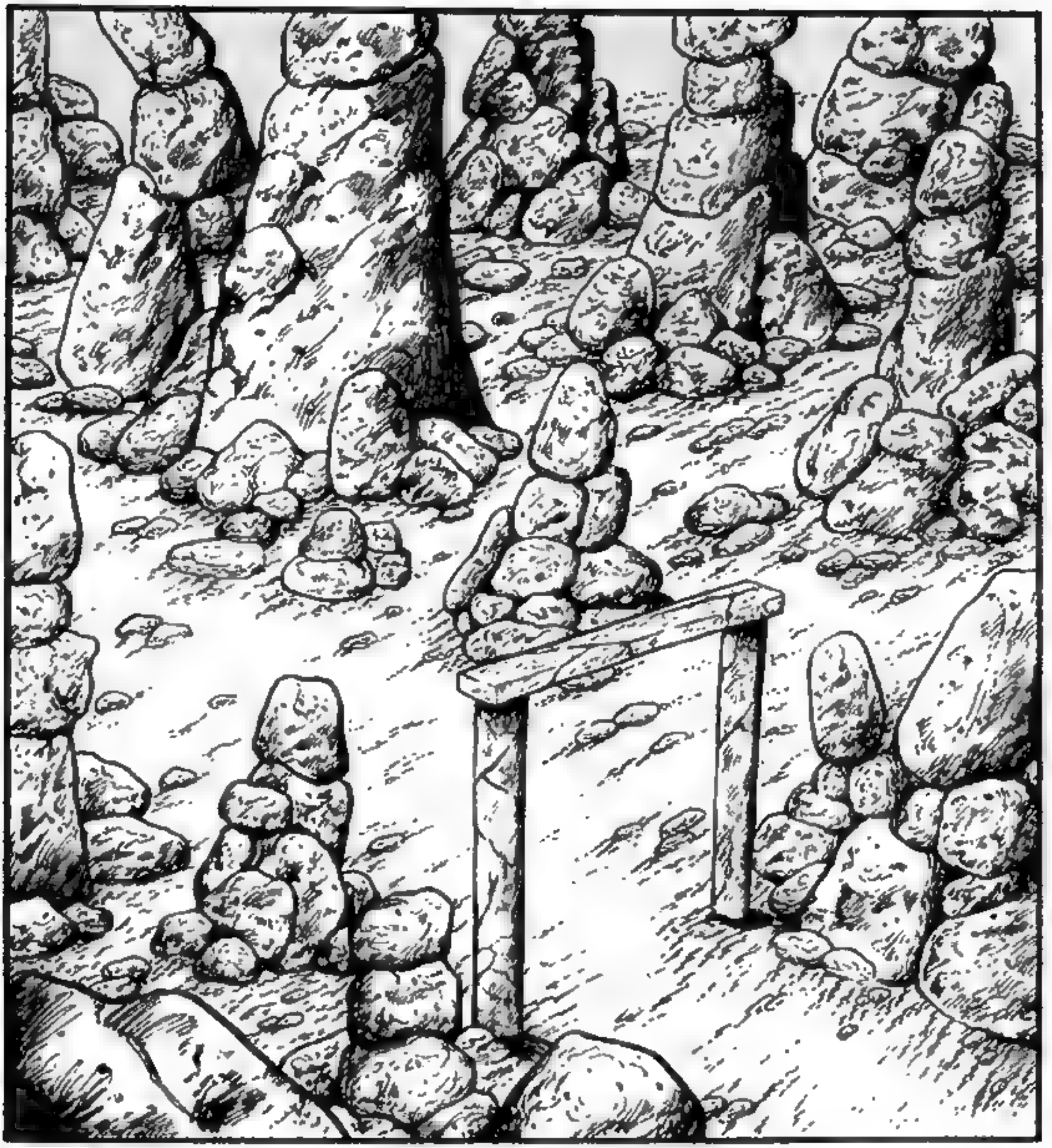
YES, AND SINCE THEN, THE RIVER CURRENTS AND WINDS HAVE BEHAVED QUITE STRANGELY PERIODICALLY, SO WE LOCALS DON'T LIKE TO APPROACH THE ROCKS.

WITH ALL DUE RESPECT, I THINK IT WOULD BE BEST FOR YOU GENERALS TO AVOID THE AREA AS WELL.

THANK YOU FOR LETTING US KNOW.

IF IT'S BEEN SET UP BY KONGMING, I'M NOW MORE AND MORE INTERESTED TO CHECK IT OUT.

SO THIS IS IT?



THERE'RE OPENINGS ON ALL SIDES... IT SEEMS LIKE A POOR ATTEMPT TO CONFUSE PEOPLE. I CAN'T BELIEVE I WAS WORRIED OVER THIS FOR SEVERAL DAYS.

WELL, LET'S TAKE A CLOSER LOOK AT WHAT THE SO-CALLED GREATEST STRATEGIST OF THE REALM HAS GONE TO GREAT EFFORTS TO BUILD.

YES, THIS PLACE DOES HAVE AN EERIE AIR ABOUT IT...

LET'S HEAD BACK.

THIS MUST BE THE END...

DID WE NOT ENTER FROM HERE?

HM? A DEAD END?

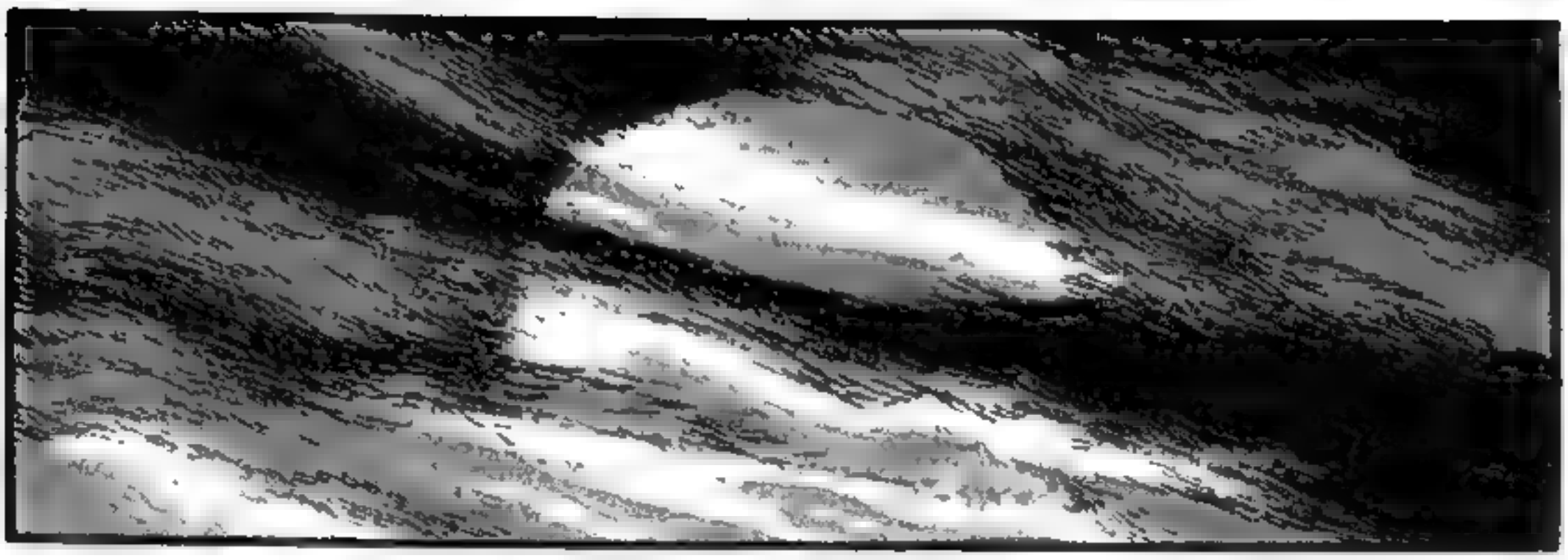
ANOTHER DEAD END!?

PERHAPS WE TOOK A WRONG TURN.

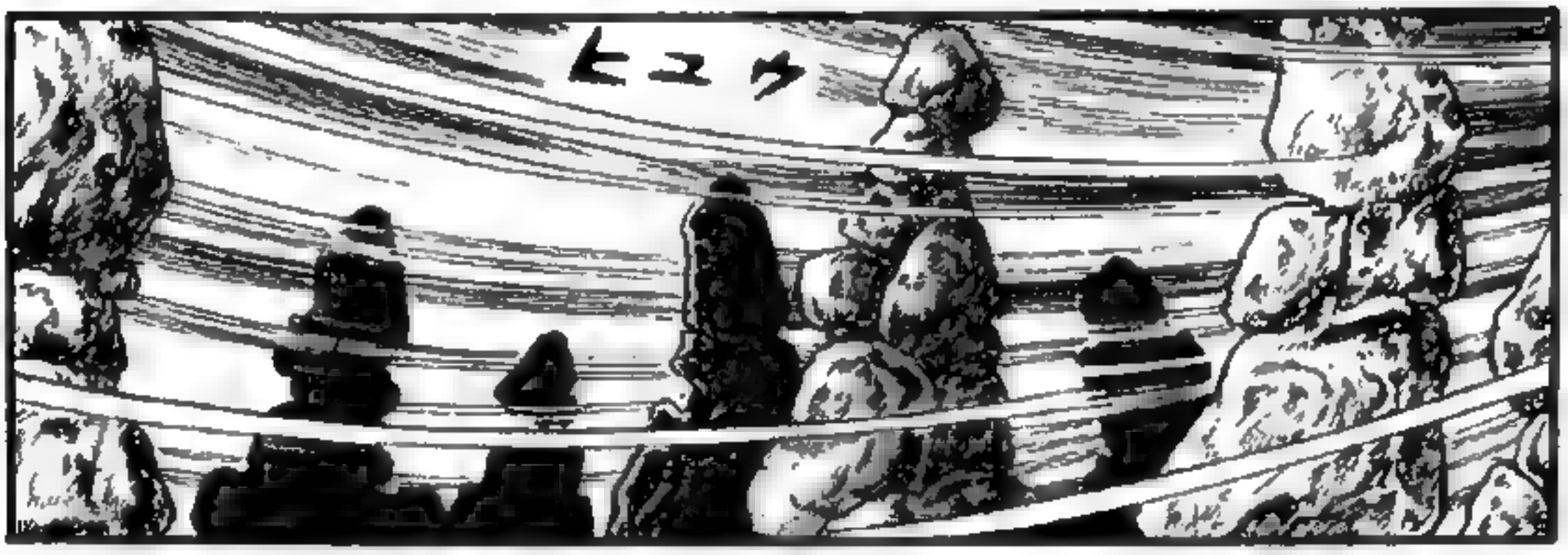
FIND THE EXIT!
AHH! ISN'T THIS THE SAME PLACE WE JUST PASSED BY!?

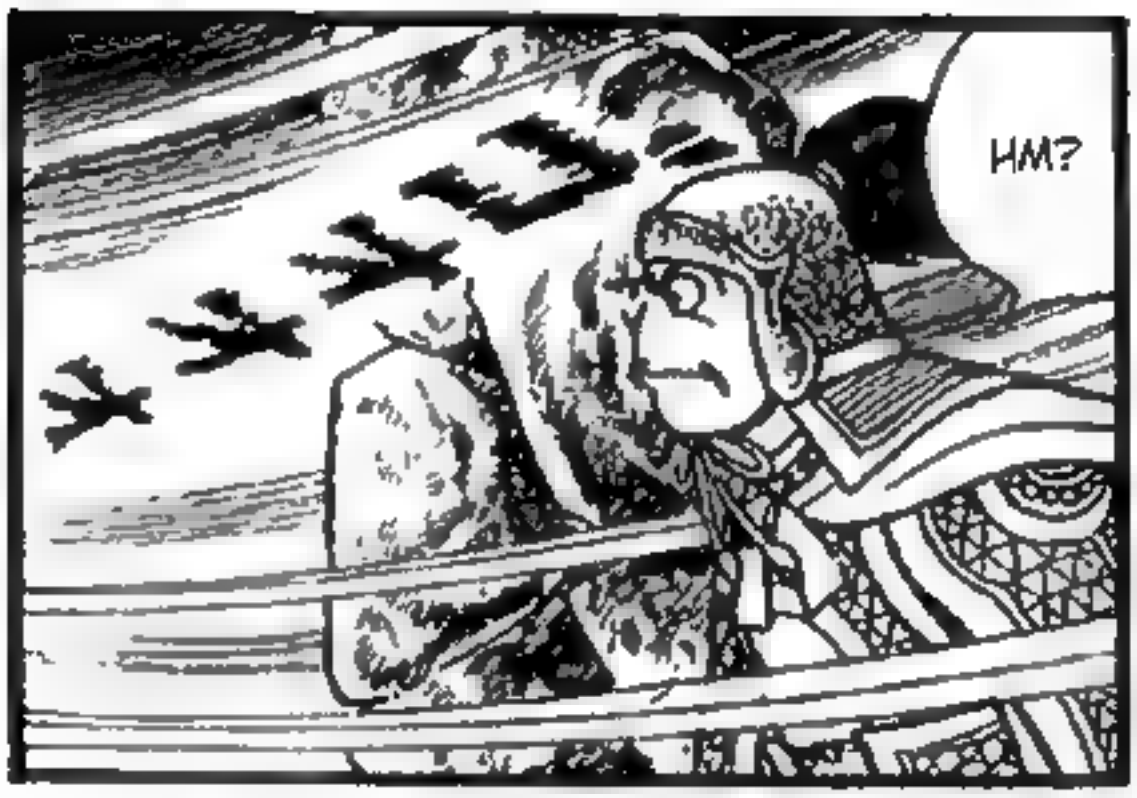
WE MUST FIND AN EXIT!

IT SEEMS THAT THIS PLACE IS A MAZE.



IT JUST FEELS LIKE WE'RE RIDING IN CIRCLES...
HUFF HUFF HUFF




HM?

STRONG WINDS HAVE BEGUN TO BLOW, COMMANDER.

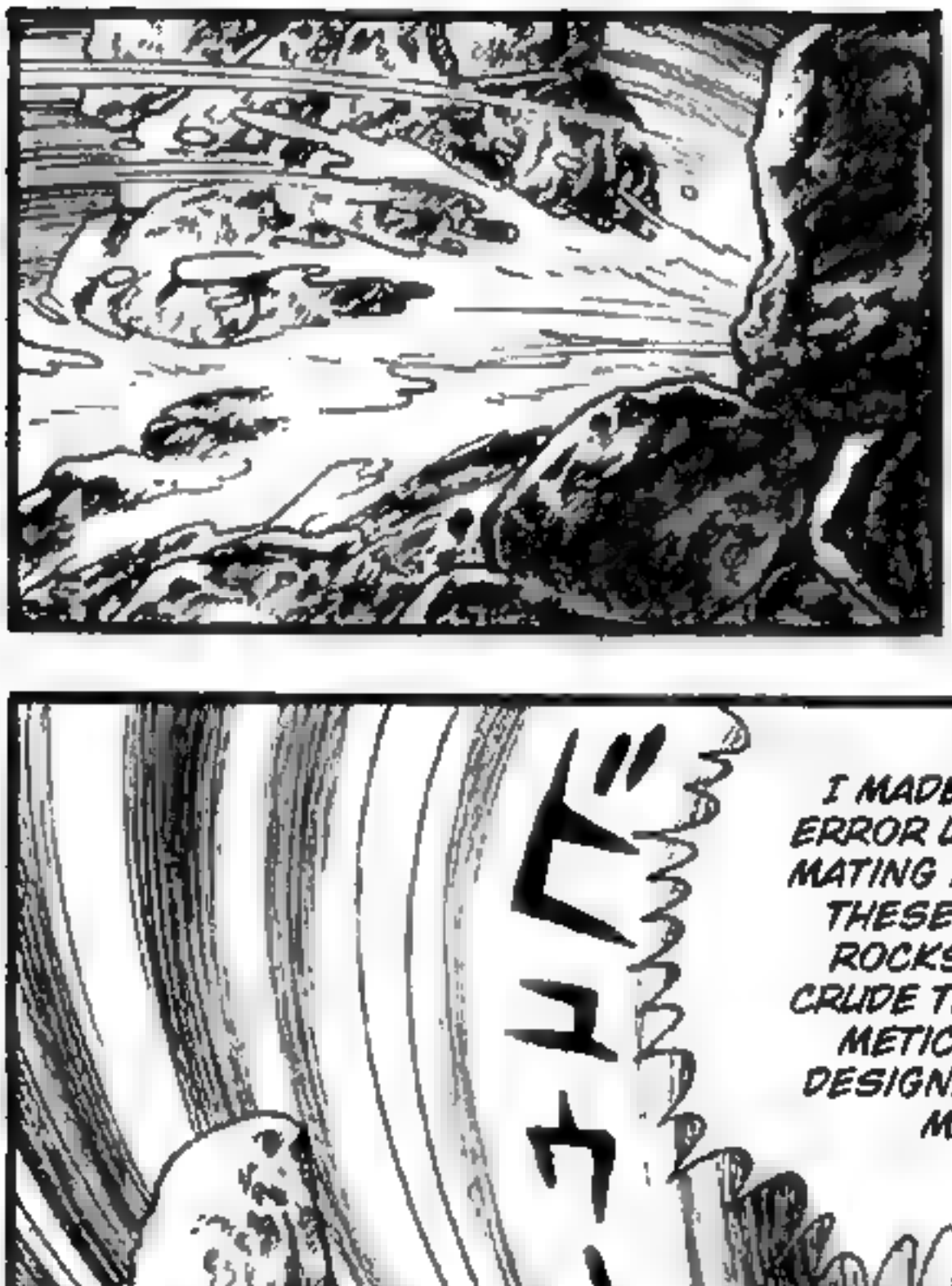
IT SOUNDS LIKE... WAVES?
WHAT'S THAT SOUND?

THE FISHER-MEN DID SAY THAT THE RIVER CURRENTS TRAVEL ODDLY HERE...

YOU'RE RIGHT.

THEN THERE'S NO TIME TO REST! WE MUST FIND AN EXIT NOW!

COULD IT BE THAT THE RIVER CURRENTS FLOW THROUGH THIS MAZE?



I MADE A GRAVE ERROR UNDERESTI-MATING KONGMING! THESE PILES OF ROCKS WAS NO CRUDE TRICK, BUT A METICULOUSLY DESIGNED KILLING MAZE!

I AM HUANG CHENGYANG, FATHER-IN-LAW OF THE MAN WHO BUILT THIS MAZE.

W-WHO'S THERE!?

WILL YOU PLEASE SHOW US THE WAY OUT, SIR?

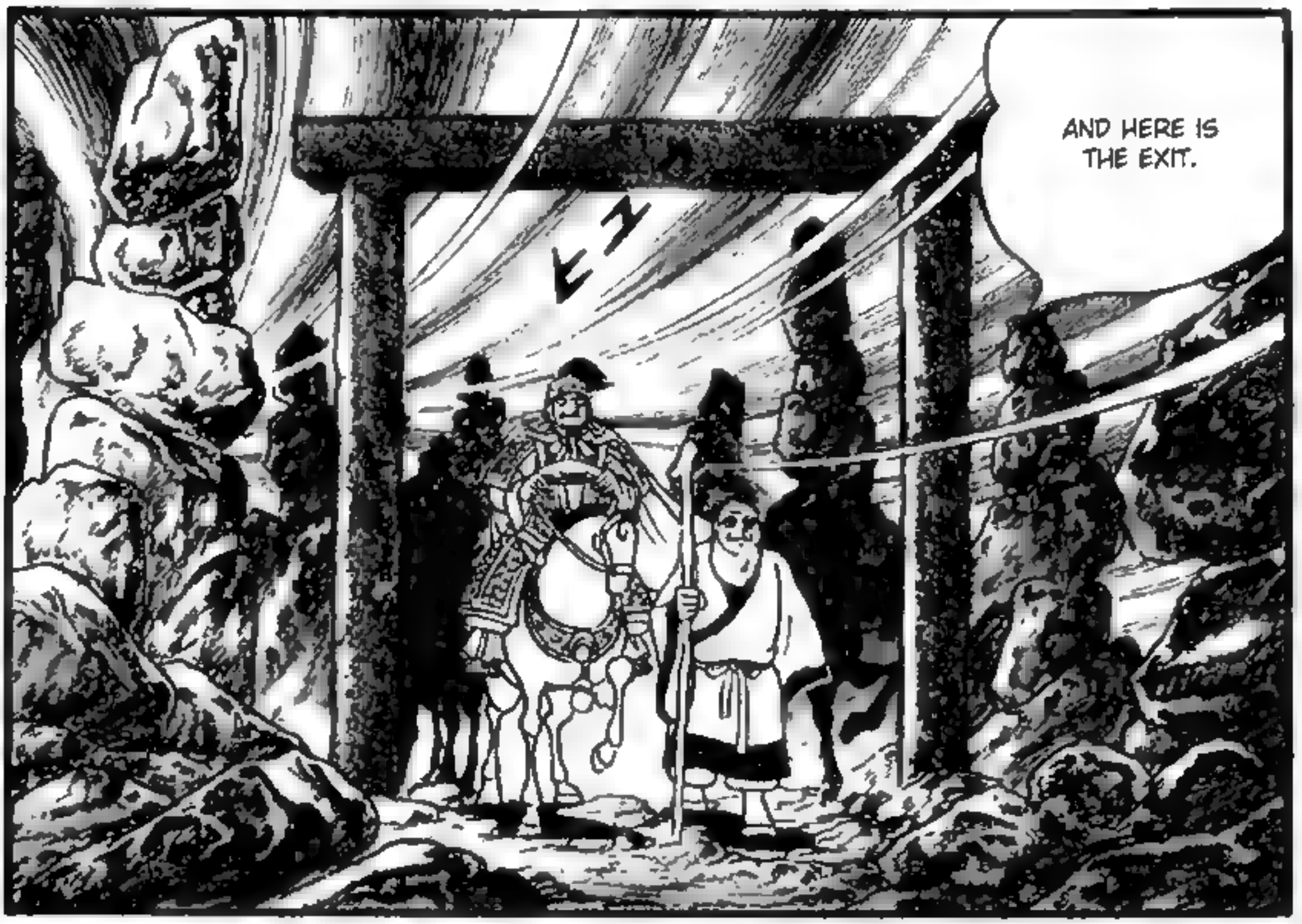
THAT, I DO.

D-DO YOU KNOW HOW TO NAVIGATE THIS MAZE?

YES, I HAD HEARD THAT YOU LOST YOUR WAY HERE SO I CAME TO HELP.

THIS MAZE IS CALLED THE STONE SENTINELS IN 8 ARRAYS. A PERSON UNFAMILIAR WITH ITS STRUCTURE IS UNABLE TO EXIT ONCE HE HAS ENTERED.

FOLLOW AFTER ME THEN.


AND HERE IS THE EXIT.

LOOK, SIRS.

ليدر

T-THANK YOU, SIR. WE OWE YOU OUR LIVES.

HAD I SHOWN UP A MOMENT LATER, YOU WOULD HAVE ALL DROWNED BY NOW.

JUST DON'T TELL ANYONE THAT IT WAS I WHO SAVED YOU. IT WOULDN'T PLEASE MY SON-IN-LAW TO HEAR I'D FOILED HIS PLAN TO KILL YOU.

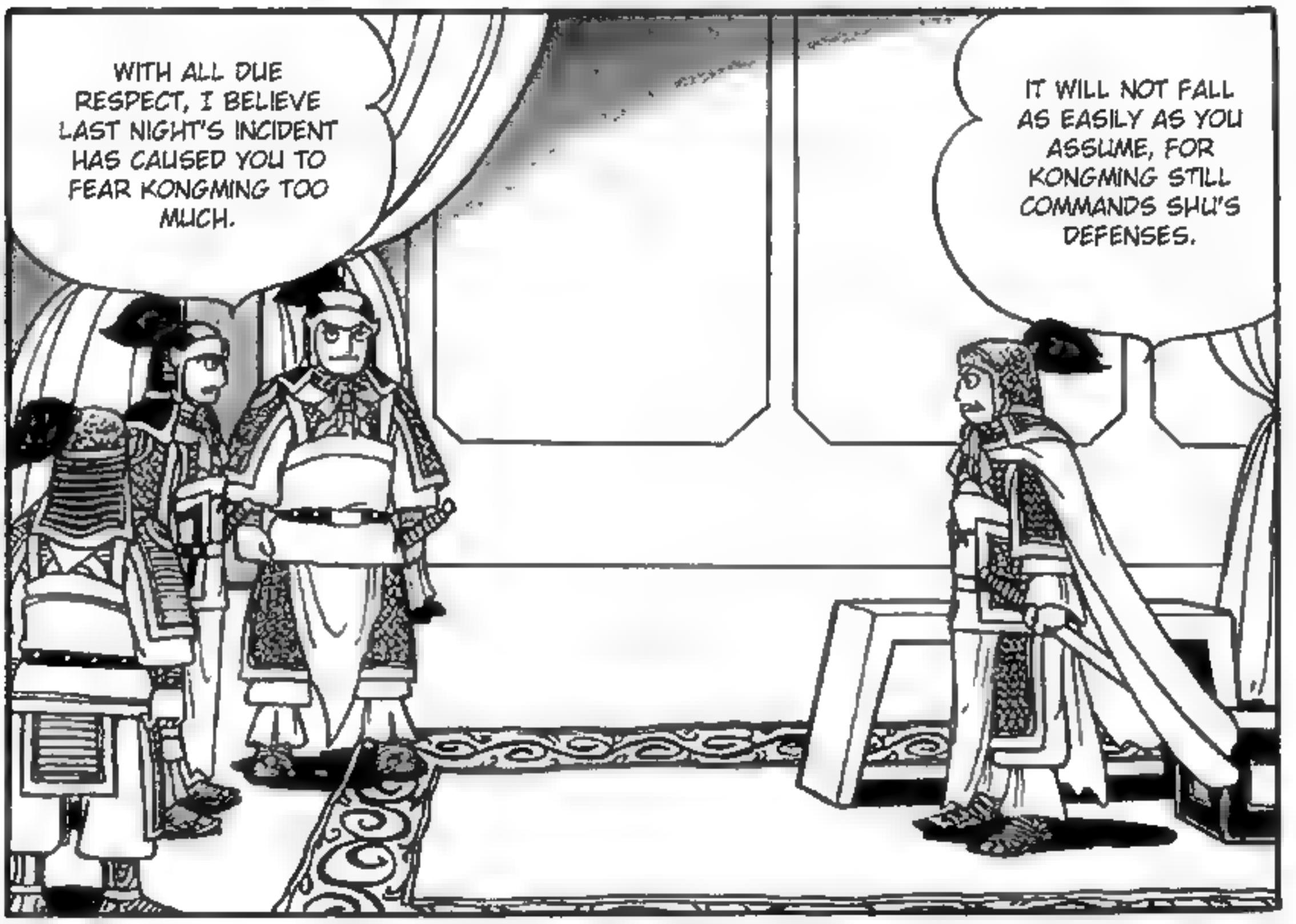
STONE SENTINELS IN 8 ARRAYS... WHAT A TERRIFYING MAN KONGMING IS...

IT WAS A MISTAKE FOR ME TO PURSUE LIU BEI ALL THE WAY HERE. SHU IS NOT OUR ONLY THREAT...
IF KONGMING'S BEEN PLANNING FOR A WHOLE YEAR AT LEAST FOR A POSSIBLE WU INVASION OF SHU, I CAN ONLY WONDER HOW MANY MORE NEFARIOUS TRAPS HE HAS IN STORE...
WE MUST RETURN AT ONCE.

THAT'S RIGHT.
WHAT!? WE ARE TO RETURN TO WU?

THAT'S RIGHT! WE MUST CAPTURE BAIDICHENG!

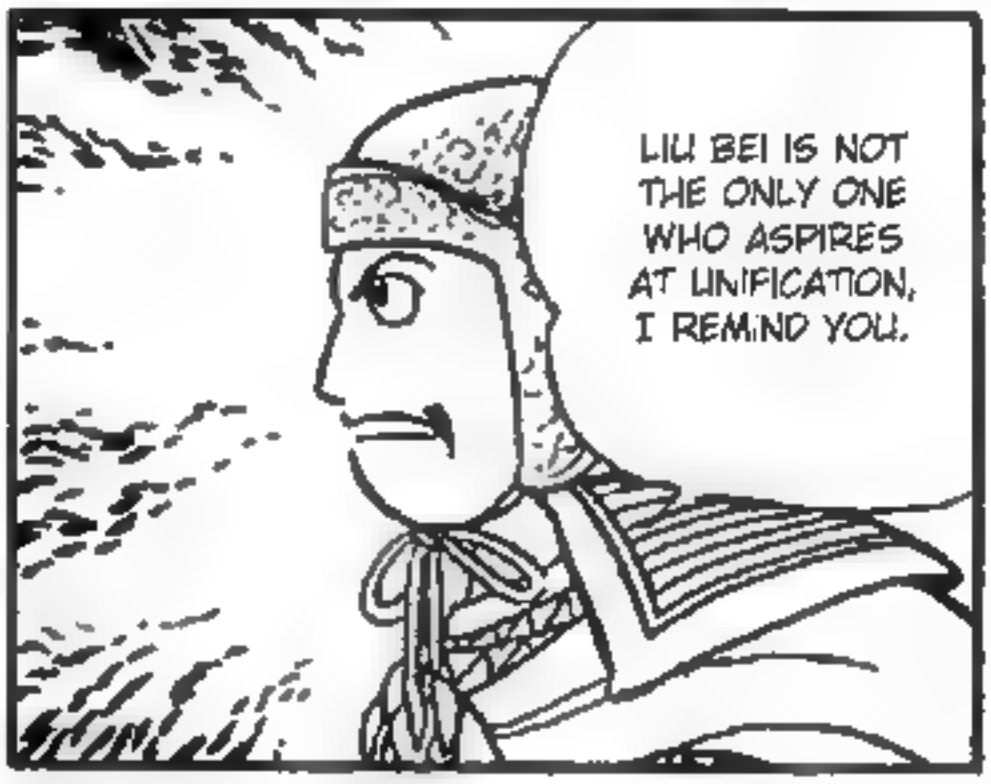
BUT WHY, COMMANDER? LIU BEI NO LONGER HAS ENOUGH TROOPS TO CONTEND AGAINST US.


WITH ALL DUE RESPECT, I BELIEVE LAST NIGHT'S INCIDENT HAS CAUSED YOU TO FEAR KONGMING TOO MUCH.
IT WILL NOT FALL AS EASILY AS YOU ASSUME, FOR KONGMING STILL COMMANDS SHU'S DEFENSES.

NO. THAT MAZE WAS BUILT LAST YEAR ACCORDING TO THE LOCALS. KONGMING HAS BEEN PREPARING FOR AT LEAST A YEAR AGAINST AN ENEMY INVASION. DO YOU MEN NOT REALIZE HOW DIFFICULT INVADING SHU WILL BE?

MORE IMPORTANTLY, WE HAVE ANOTHER THREAT TO WORRY ABOUT.

YOU MEAN CAO PI!?


LIU BEI IS NOT THE ONLY ONE WHO ASPIRES AT UNIFICATION, I REMIND YOU.

BUT DO WE NOT HAVE A NON-AGGRESSION PACT WITH WEI?
MOST OF WU'S TROOPS ARE MASSED HERE IN ITS WESTERN FRONT AT THE MOMENT. WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF WEI ARMIES STORMED ACROSS OUR NORTHERN BORDERS RIGHT NOW?

HMM.. YOU'RE RIGHT, COMMANDER. A WEI ATTACK WOULD PROVE TO BE DISASTROUS FOR US RIGHT NOW.

PACTS AND ALLIANCES ARE ONLY BACKED BY MILITARY MIGHT IN AN AGE OF CHAOS. IF WE ARE TOO WEAK TO PROTECT OUR BORDERS, CAO PI WILL NOT BE GENEROUS ENOUGH TO TURN A BLIND EYE TO THAT FACT.

MNN...

REGARDLESS OF LIU BEI'S FATE, WE HAVE UNDENIABLY DELIVERED A CRITICAL BLOW TO SHU. IT WILL TAKE MANY YEARS BEFORE SHU IS STRONG ENOUGH TO EVEN THINK ABOUT ATTACKING US AGAIN.

BUT IF WE I DOES NOT ATTACK, THEN IT WOULD MEAN WE ALLOWED LIU BEI TO ESCAPE WITH HIS LIFE.

I SUPPOSE WITHDRAWING IS THE SAFER AND WISER OPTION...

YES, SIR.
WE HAVE ALREADY ACCOMPLISHED OUR OBJECTIVE OF DENYING LIU BEI'S GOAL OF WU-CONQUEST. OUR NEXT PRIORITY IS TO DEFEND AGAINST THE OTHER MAN WHO ASPIRES TO DESTROY WU.
LIKE A STORM, THE WU ARMY QUICKLY RETREATED BACK TOWARDS THEIR LANDS.
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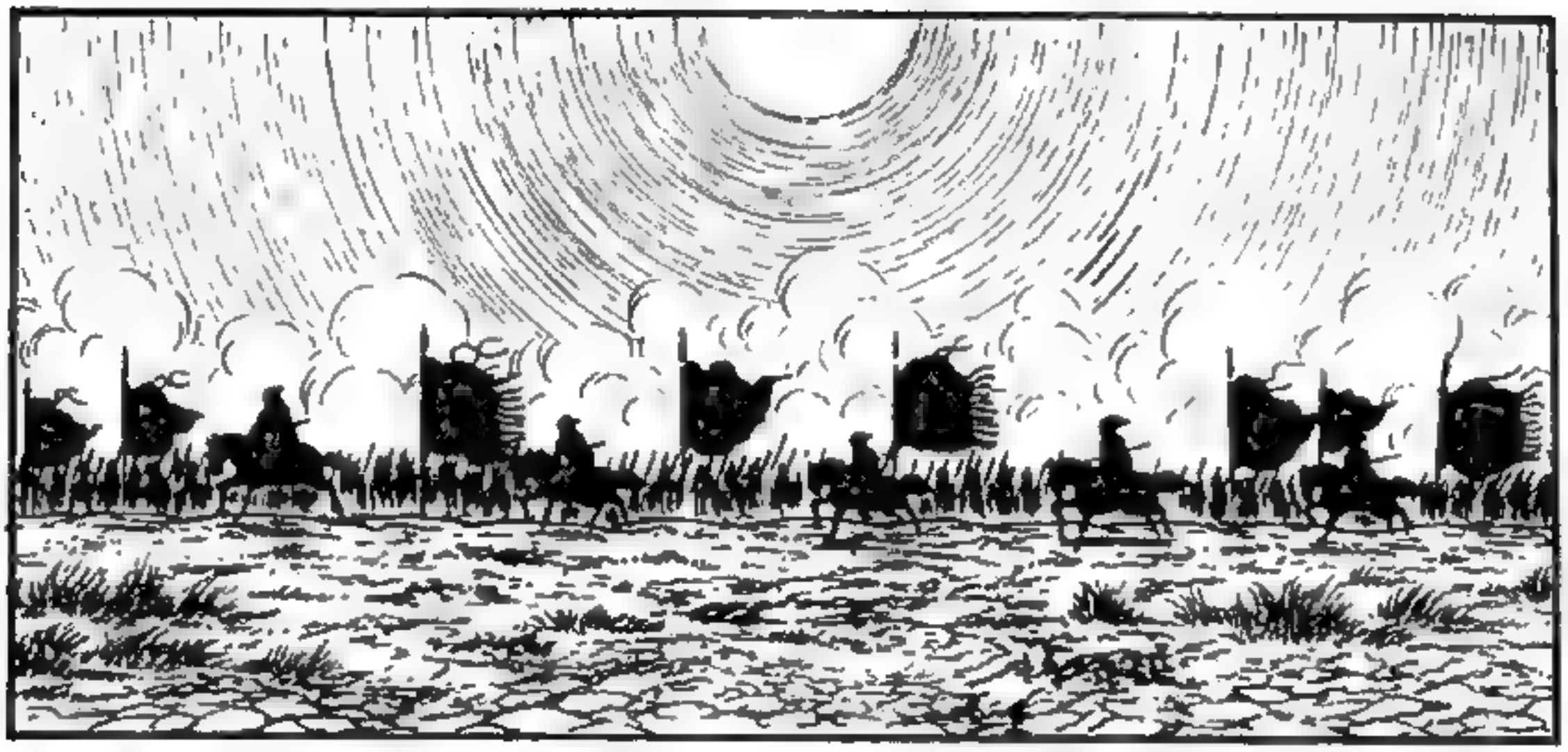

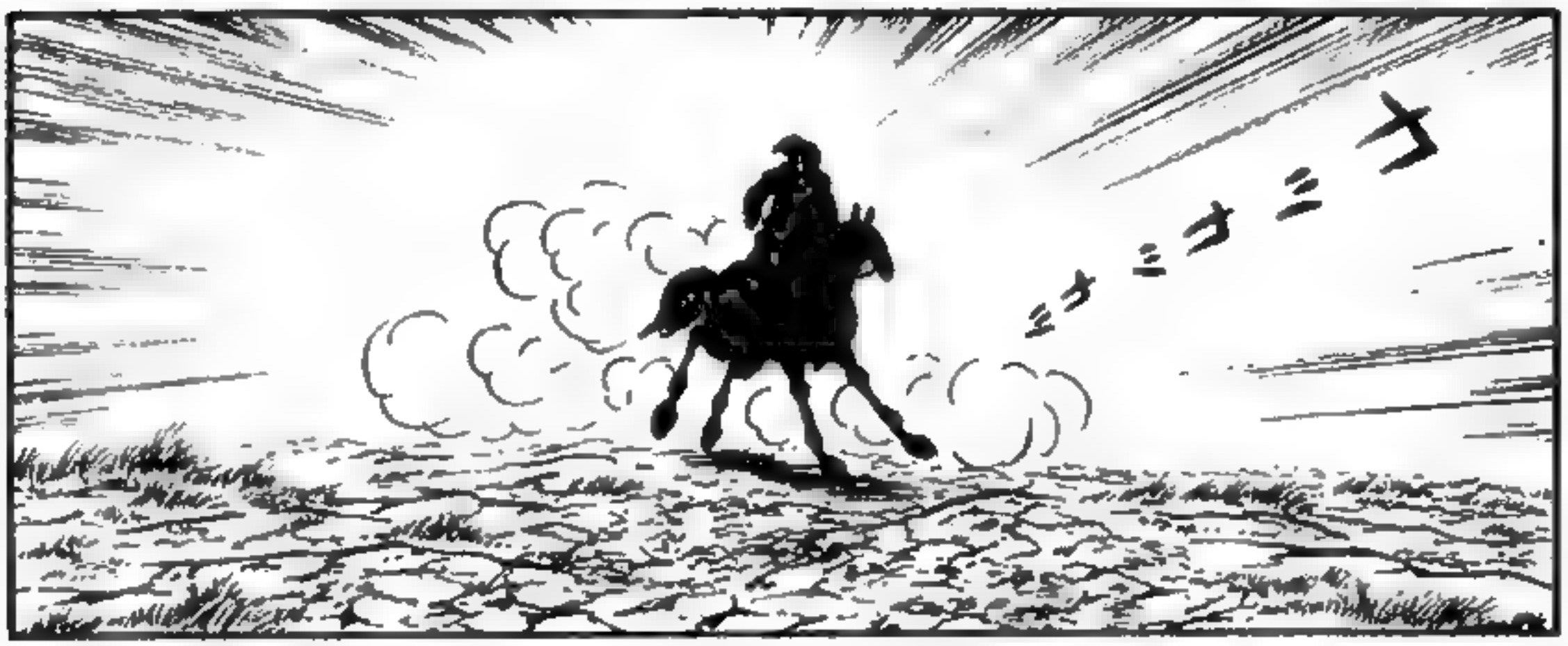

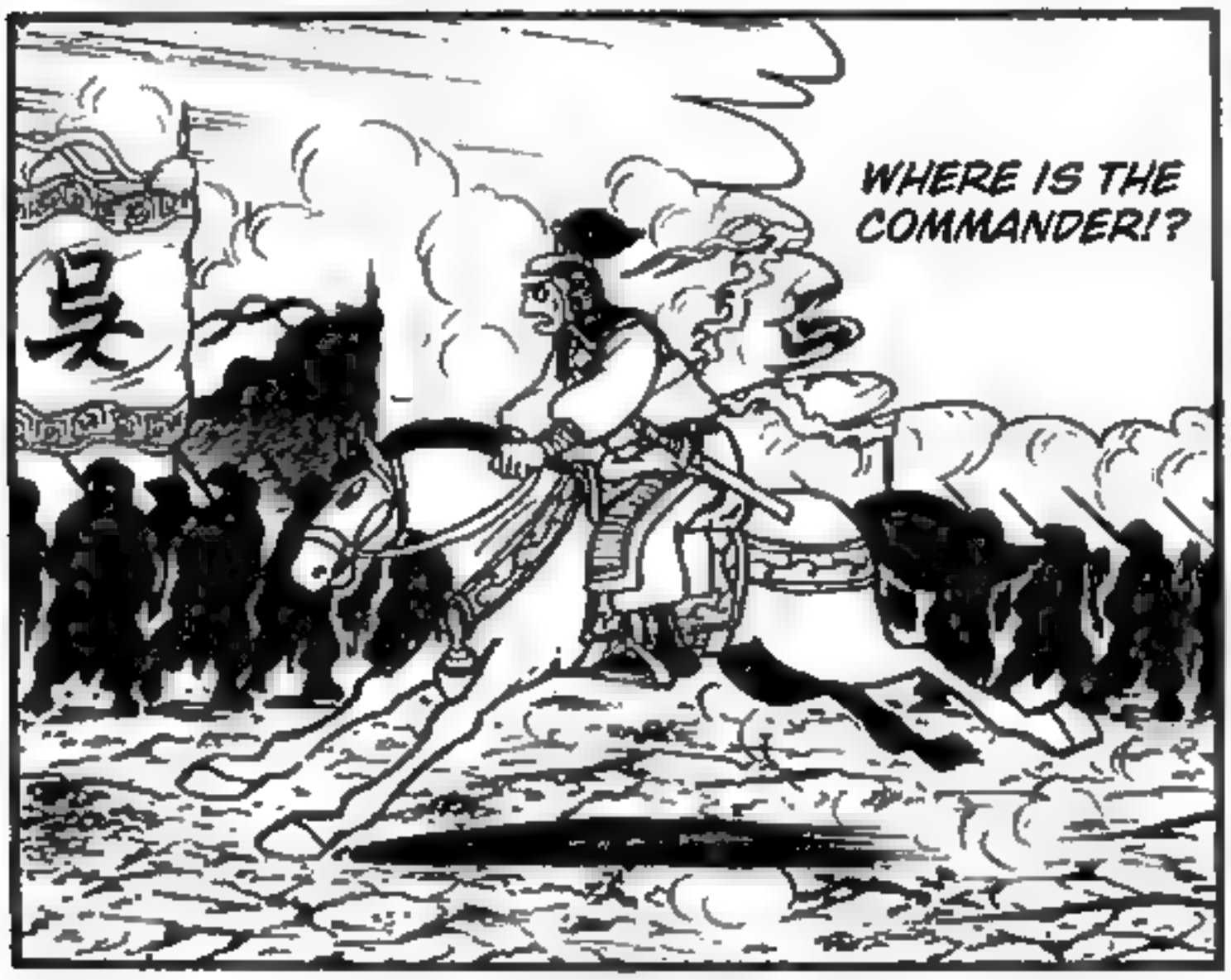
WHERE IS THE COMMANDER!?

COMMANDER LU XUN!

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I AM HERE!

AGHH!

WHAT!?
IT'S AN EMERGENCY! WEI ARMIES ARE APPROACHING OUR NORTHERN BORDERS FROM 3 DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS!

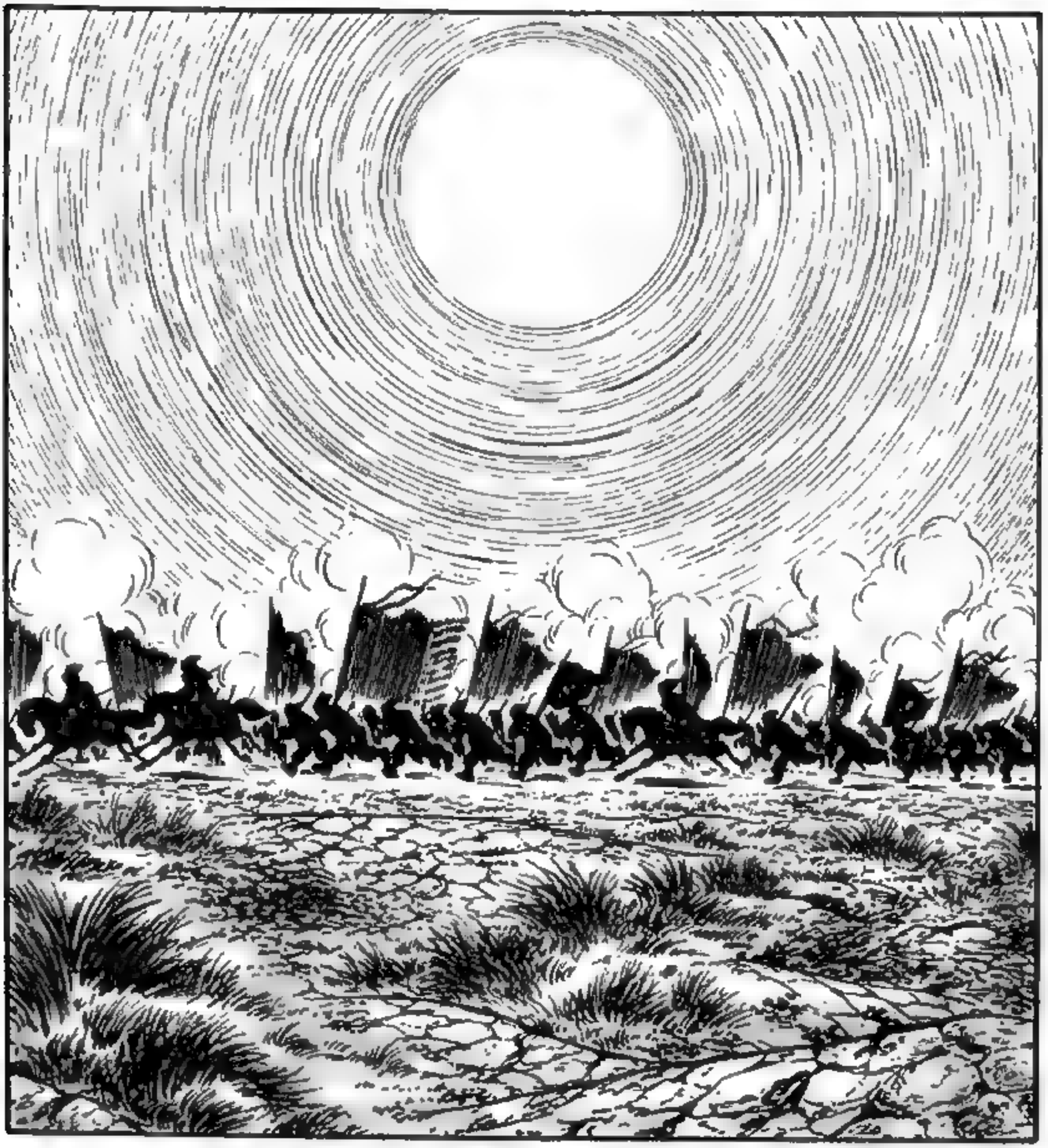
THE WEI!?

YOUR FORE-SIGHT IS INCREDIBLE, COMMANDER.

SEE, IT'S JUST AS I HAD FEARED.

YES, SIR!
HASTEN OUR MARCH! WE MUST HURRY BACK TO FEND OFF THE WEI ARMIES!

吳
IT'S A GOOD THING WE'RE ALREADY ON OUR WAY BACK.



WEI

YES, AND HE'S ALREADY MAKING PREPARATIONS AGAINST OUR FORCES, YOUR MAJESTY.
WHAT!? LU XUN CALLED OFF THE PURSUIT AND PULLED BACK FROM SHU!?

THEY ARE MERELY EYEING THE ENEMIES FOR NOW.

WHAT'S THE CURRENT STATUS OF OUR FORCES THEN?

I CAN'T BELIEVE IT! HE CALLED OFF THE PURSUIT EVEN AFTER CRUSHING THE INVASION?

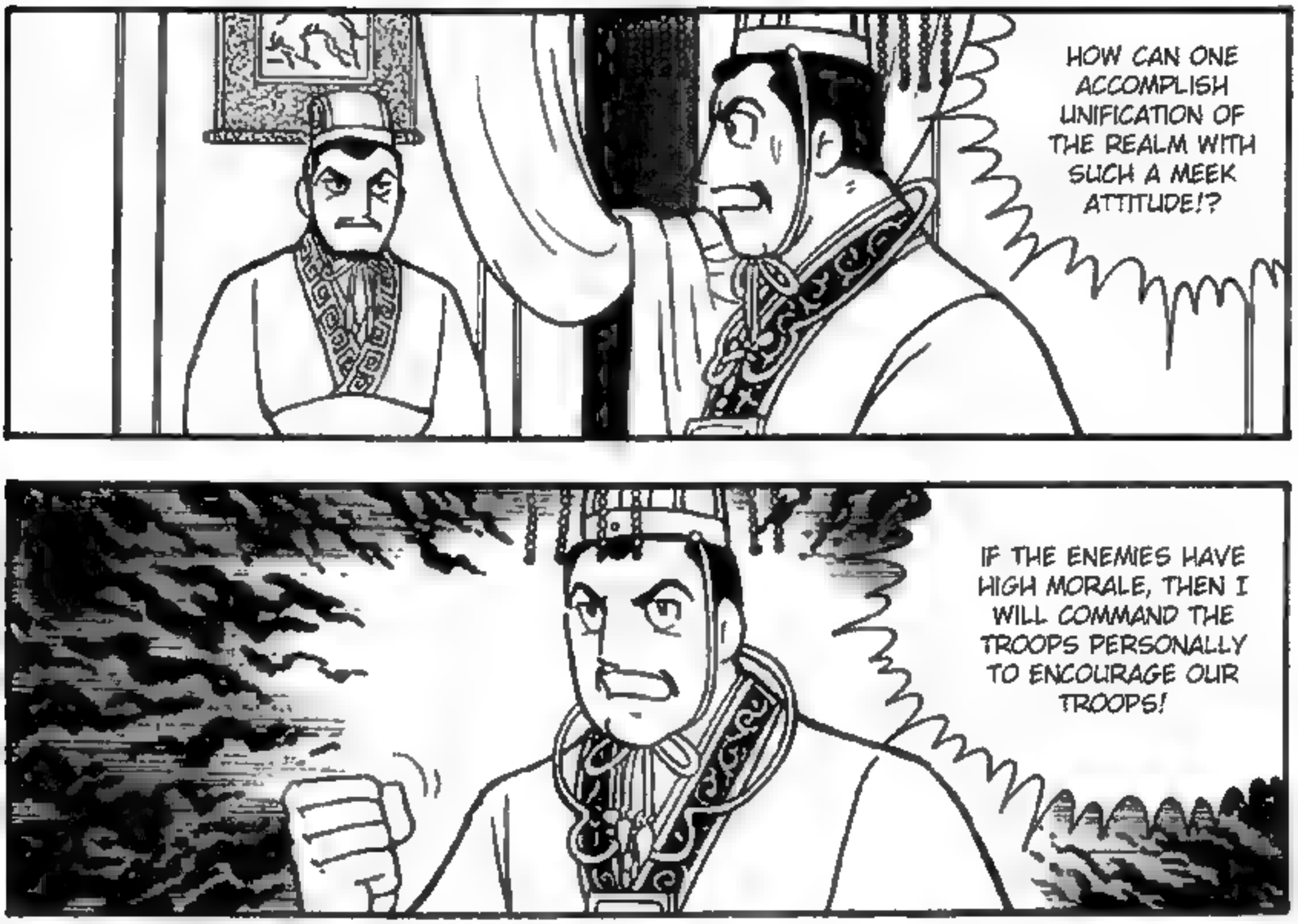
I WILL GO DOWN TO LEAD THE TROOPS MYSELF.

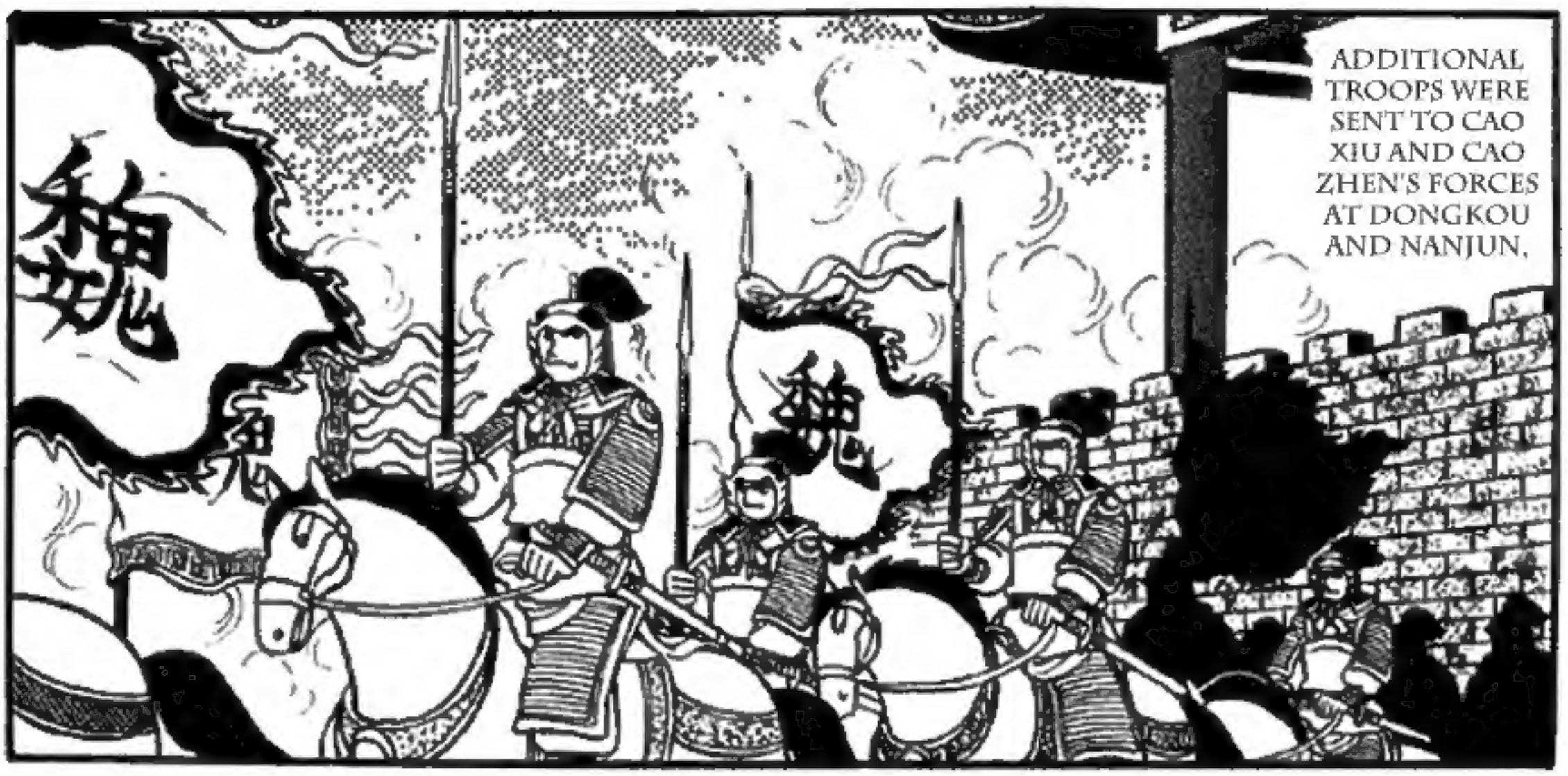
HMM...

WU MORALE HAS GROWN A HUNDRED-FOLD WITH THEIR GRAND VICTORY OVER SHU. FIGHTING SUCH CONFIDENT FOES IS DISADVANTAGEOUS.

YES, JIA XU?

IF I MAY INTERJECT, YOUR HIGHNESS...


HOW CAN ONE ACCOMPLISH UNIFICATION OF THE REALM WITH SUCH A MEEK ATTITUDE!?
IF THE ENEMIES HAVE HIGH MORALE, THEN I WILL COMMAND THE TROOPS PERSONALLY TO ENCOURAGE OUR TROOPS!
NOW IS THE TIME TO ATTACK WU! PREPARE FOR MOBILIZATION!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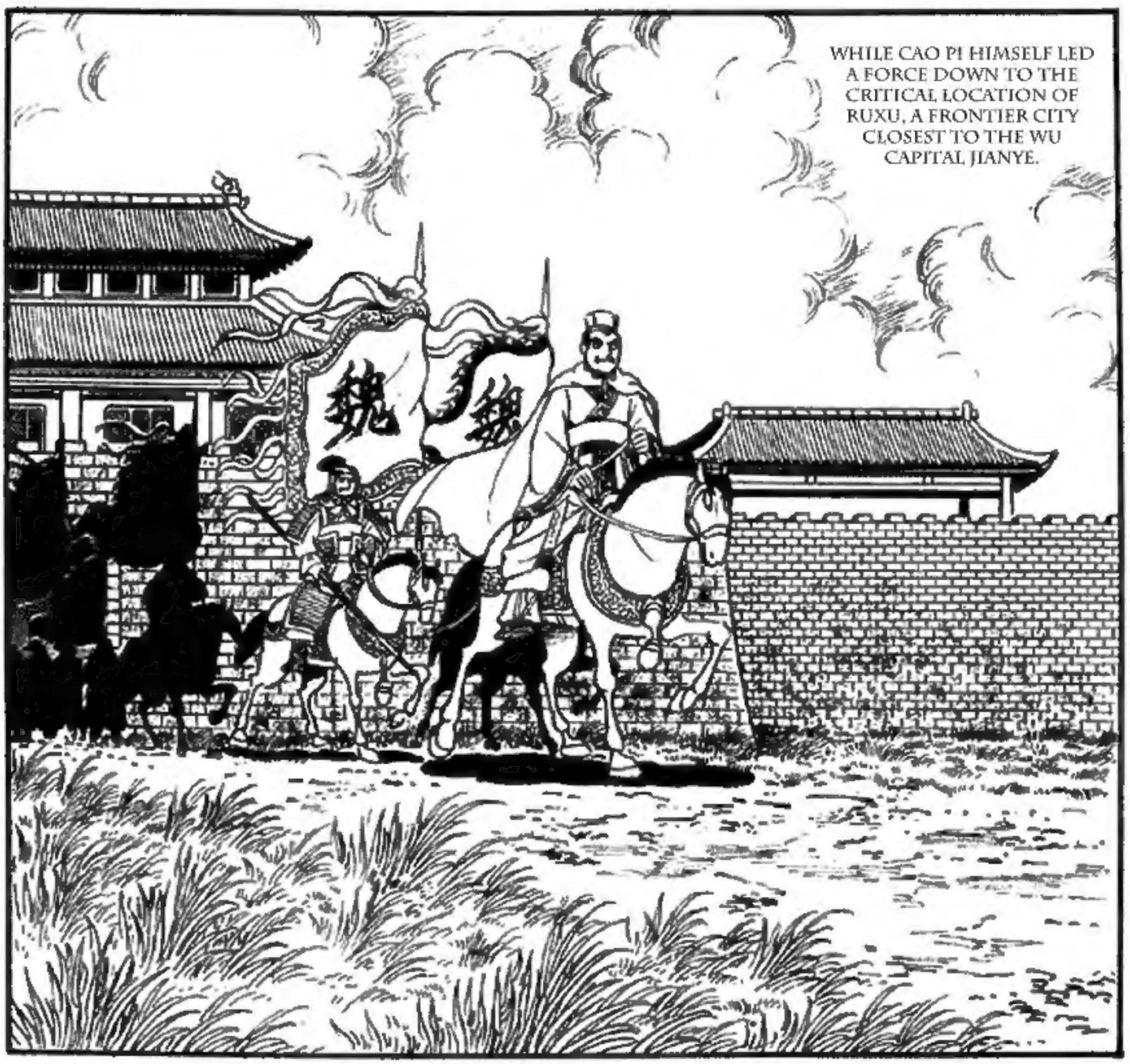
ADDITIONAL TROOPS WERE SENT TO CAO XIU AND CAO ZHEN'S FORCES AT DONGKOU AND NANJUN,


WHILE CAO PI HIMSELF LED A FORCE DOWN TO THE CRITICAL LOCATION OF RUXU, A FRONTIER CITY CLOSEST TO THE WU CAPITAL JIANYE.
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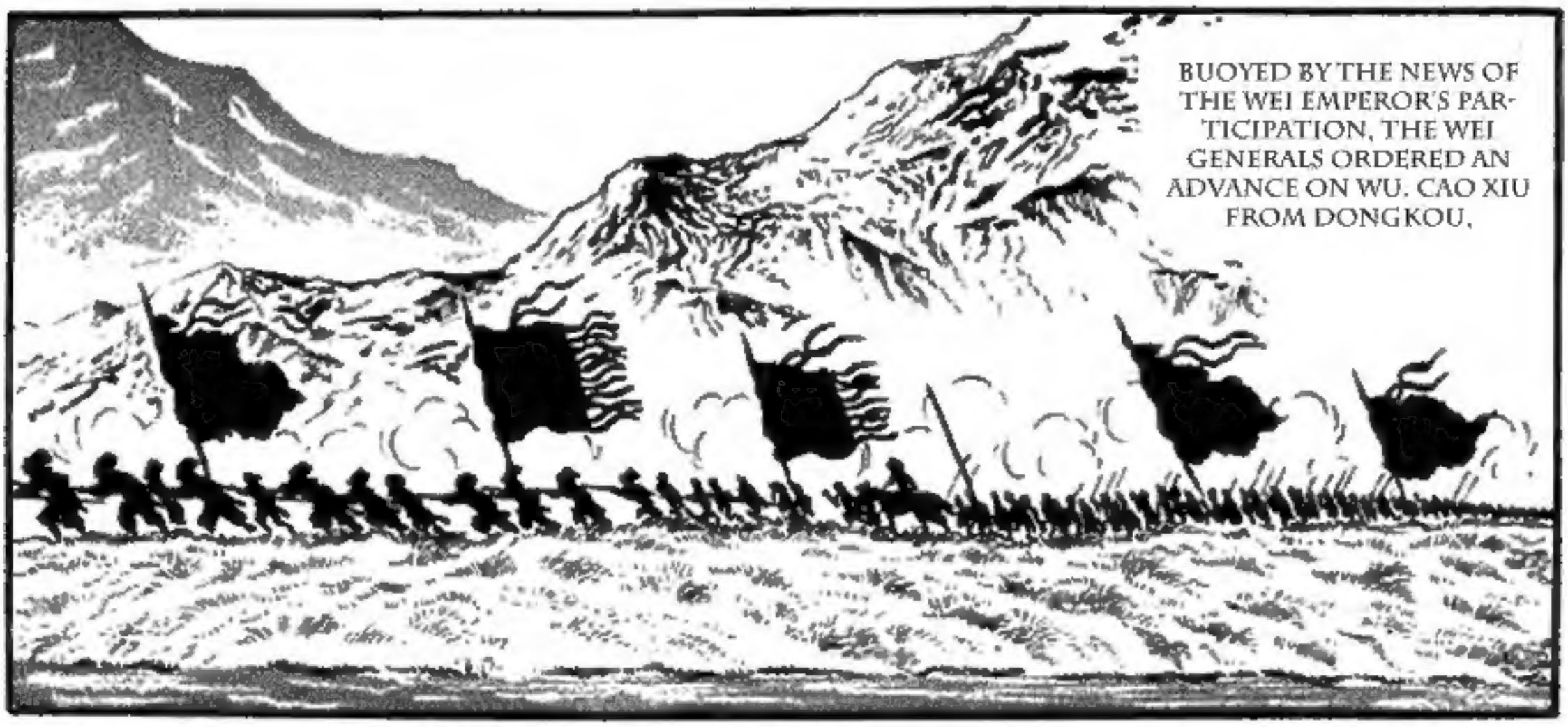
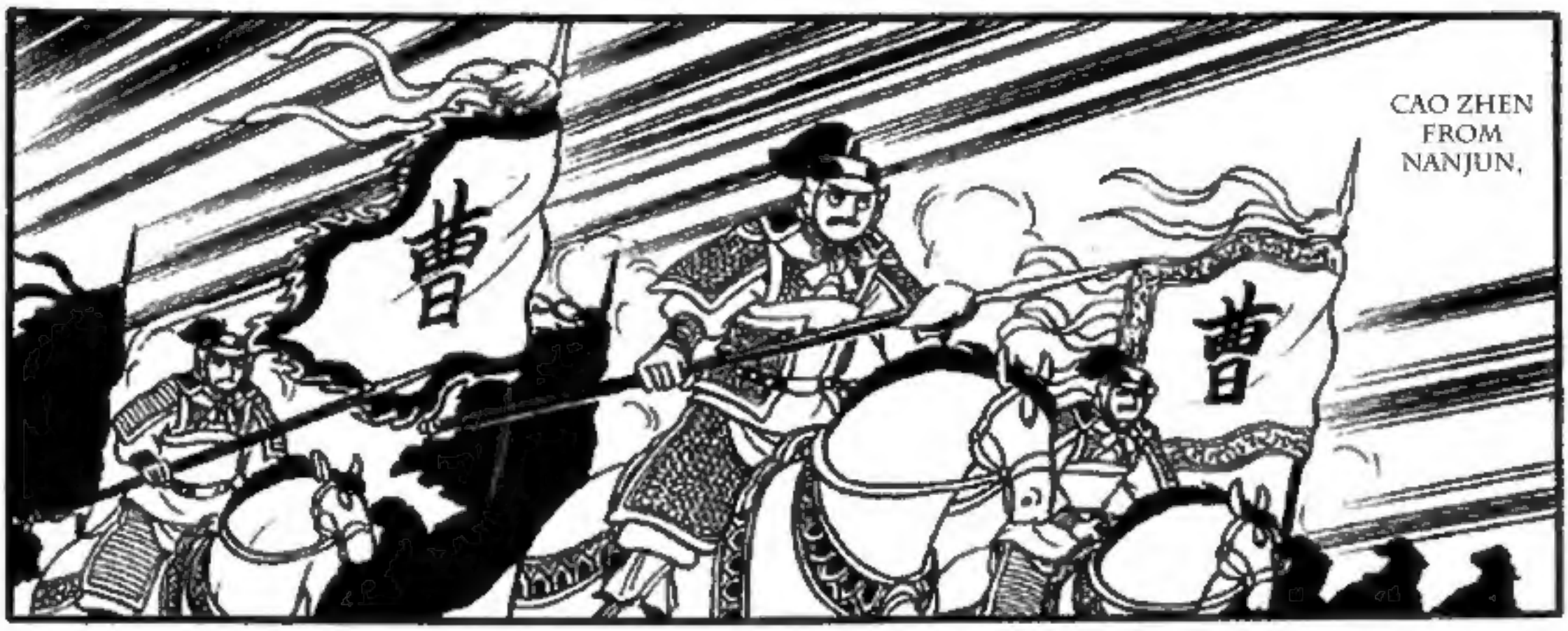
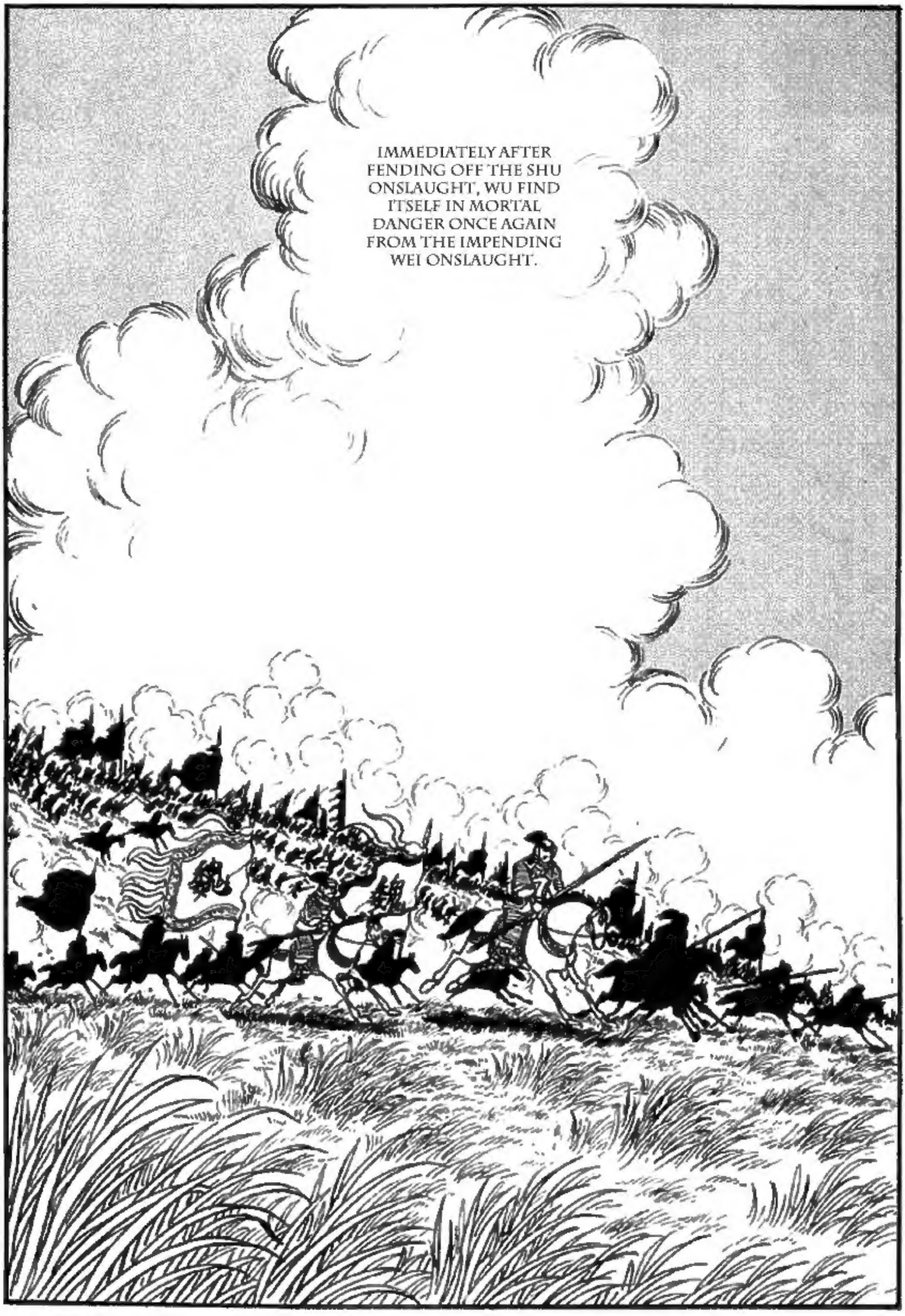

BUOYED BY THE NEWS OF THE WEI EMPEROR'S PARTICIPATION, THE WEI GENERALS ORDERED AN ADVANCE ON WU. CAO XIU FROM DONGKOU,


CAO ZHEN FROM NANJUN,
曹
曹

AND CAO REN FROM RUXU.
曹仁
大刀


IMMEDIATELY AFTER FENDING OFF THE SHU ONSLAUGHT, WU FIND ITSELF IN MORTAL DANGER ONCE AGAIN FROM THE IMPENDING WEI ONSLAUGHT.

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三国志

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横山 光輝

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